2009

Gender dynamics in peer interaction and their influence on second language learning in the English-as-a-second language classroom

Xiulian Zhu

The University of San Francisco

GENDER DYNAMICS IN PEER INTERACTION AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND-LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

A Dissertation Presented
to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by

朱秀蓮

Hsiu-Lien Chu
San Francisco
May 2009

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Dissertation Abstract

Gender Dynamics in Peer Interaction and Their Influence on Second Language Learning in the English-as-a-Second-Language Classroom

In the field of second language acquisition, few studies have addressed the issue of gender, particularly its influence in class participation. This study investigates gender in three areas: gender dynamics, interactional styles, and its impact on second language learning. Qualitative research was conducted in a university-level ESL program. Data were collected for over two months including classroom observations, fieldnotes, and individual interviews. Ten participants, five males and five females, were selected from diverse cultural backgrounds. Data analysis was based on a dynamic, interactional, scaffolding, and holistic (D.I.S.H.) approach, offered by the *diversity* framework of language and gender studies and Vygotsky's the Z*one of Proximal Development* (ZPD).

The results showed that each participant carried his or her own repertoire of gender dynamics, which contained its potentials and could be expanded when social relations varied. These repertoires centered on familiarity, which served as a factor to mediate gender dynamics. Gender was imbedded in seven major interactional styles, from word, phrase, and sentence level to discourse levels. In addition, gender promoted as well as hindered second language learning in linguistic, psychological, and social levels.

Familiarity not only influenced gender dynamics but also second language learning. The findings imply that the view of fixed interaction is challenged. Equal time

of participation could be achieved not by increasing the amount of time but by increasing familiarity. Instructors and curriculum developers may design activities to establish familiarity. Social conversations meet the needs of language learners for establishing familiarity. Therefore, teaching and learning could be accomplished through guided or theme-based social conversations, which facilitate gender dynamics as well as create opportunities for second language practices.

Hsiu-Lien Chu

Hsiu-Lien Chu, Author

Susan Katz

Susan Roberta Katz
Chairperson, Dissertation Committee

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Hsiu-Lien Chu	May 19, 2009
Candidate	Date

Dissertation Committee

Susan Katz	May 19, 2009
Chairperson	
Shabnam Koirala-Azad	May 8, 2009
Stephanie Vandrick	May 8, 2009

This dissertation is dedicated to

God

&

My Family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dissertation Topic

The original idea was from
Dr. Mohammad Popal's class of Sociology of Language
Where I learned about gender and language
Dr. Susan Katz's class of Cross-Cultural Literacy
Where I met **Vygotsky**
Without them all
I would not have thought about gender in collaborative learning.

Dissertation Committee Members

The main resource for my dissertation
Dr. Susan Katz
Warm and helpful
Cared about me when I faced difficulties
Led me to positive thinking
Effective leadership and compliments
Guided me to move forward efficiently
Dr. Koirala-Azad
Patient and friendly
. Guided me to design my methodology
Strengthened my understanding about gender
Professor Vandrick
Considerate and careful
Shared her bibliography and published articles
Built on the knowledge of gender in ESL pedagogy
Provided immediate help when I encountered difficulties

Sponsors

Dr. Allen and Dorothy Calvin
Through their generosity
I received the Allen and Dorothy Calvin Doctoral Dissertation Award
To assist in my research

The ESL Program

The **coordinator** of the ESL program
Allowed me to conduct this research
Professor Shelwyn Corrigan
Facilitated my data collection
All Participants
Provided insights to guide my study

Family

The main support of my life
Father, How-Suey
Encouraged me by this Chinese poem
放開肚量吃飯 打起精神讀書
Mother, Mei-Hsien
Supported me on the phone
Brother, Hsien-Ping
Motivated me through email
Second Mother, Francoise Martynoff
Loves me as her daughter
Cares about me from her heart
Taught me how to face difficulties
Through her humor and jokes

English Teachers and Professors

Influential teachers in my life
From high school to graduate school
Prepared me for doctoral study
In a second language
Rita Sun Pi-Fang
Unlocked my potential for learning English
Ming Mei Lin
Taught me English pronunciation for a speech contest
Dr. Pi-Hua Tsai
Inspired me to learn English actively
Dr. Michael Reed
Encouraged me to advance to doctoral study

Supportive Friends

Ken Yoshioka
Helped me to format the layout of my dissertation
Carol Spector
Brainstormed key words for searching journal articles
Jayson Madriaga
Helped me to access a linguistic database
Sandra Jewett
Supported me in the journey of writing
Church Friends
Prayed for me and my family
I have so **many friends** to thank

God

I thank **God** for creating all social connections
Keeping my parents good health
Listening to my prayers
This dissertation is completed
Under God's Love

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Gender in Interaction by Hsiu-Lien Chu (2008)
Interaction between you and me,
Standing on two extreme sides
Back and forth on an invisible line
Continuing and dynamic
Constructed and reconstructed
We are in the process
You make me and I make you.

Introduction

Interaction occurs in everyday social life and plays a major role in educational settings. Yet, we rarely consciously notice how we generate our conversation and how it varies by contexts and settings. When we interact with interlocutors, we obviously notice the interlocutors' physical sex, which is biologically determined. We do not pay attention to how gender is embedded in our physical bodies and disclosed through interaction silently and invisibly.

Gender is considered as socially constructed and based on biological divisions; however, the problem is that society tends to see two genders as masculine and feminine (Coates, 2004). Coates claimed that gender is plural, representing "a range of femininities and masculinities" (p. 4). Connell (2002) further explained that gender is viewed as "the structure of social relations" (p. 10) and its social practices, beyond physical characteristics and psychological behaviors. Gender relations include not only difference and dichotomy but also patterns of social arrangement.

As we consider gender as plural, gender is intertwined with interaction. Most importantly, language acts as a cognitive medium and intersects with gender in the process of interaction. Interactions create opportunities for negotiation and construction

of gender. Social relations among or between interlocutors are reflected in their language use.

Specifically, in an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classroom, English becomes the medium as well as the content for classroom interaction (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). When ESL learners are engaged in pairs or groups, peer interactions create an opportunity for gender practices, in which an interlocutor positions him/herself as a particular gender in the interaction, as well as for language practices. An awareness of the concept of gender as a system of social categories and a factor in social interactions, is crucial to discover how gender is interwoven in learner-to-learner interaction and second language learning.

Willett (1996) noticed a pervasive lack of gender studies in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Ehrlich (1997) questioned how theoretical insights and suggestions from language and gender research might contribute to the field of gender and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Gender studies have become a trend in TESOL and SLA in the past decade (Davis & Skilton-Sylvester, 2004). Studies in the *diversity* framework have viewed gender not only as a male-female dichotomy, but as a sociocultural constituent of the society in which the individual lives. Gender is a dynamic, constructed, and reconstructed process as the individual interacts with society, rather than having a static status.

However, Ehrlich (1997) pointed out that the concept of gender as "a construct shaped by historical, cultural, social, and interactional factors" (p. 424) has not yet added to the research in the SLA. Theories of SLA, such as Krashen's (1980) comprehensible input and Swain's (1985) comprehensible output, assumed language learners as

"idealized" and "abstract" (p. 440) and ignored their social environments in which learners were involved. The early study of gender and SLA assumed that females are superior to males in second language learning. Ehrlich claimed that "the social practices and activities that often enter into the construction of gender within particular communities can have profound effects on acquisition outcomes" (p. 441).

In the process of second language acquisition, the ESL classroom creates a unique social interaction for the instructor and learners to encounter linguistic and social diversity of the world. English becomes not only the content of learning, but also the medium of communication (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). The ESL instructors face a challenge to meet the needs of diverse students, not only their languages and cultures, but also their gender. With the awareness of how students adopt their English learning, ESL instructors may understand students' needs and choose particular forms of instruction to foster more effective second language learning. Brown and Rodgers (2002) declared that these special needs and challenges provide opportunities for special insights, which research of second language classrooms would provide rather than other classroom settings.

Current research focuses on three different types of gendered interaction in the language classroom: between teacher and student, student and student, and native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) (Chavez, 2001). Cochran (1996) claimed that ESL female students are "doubly marginalized" (p. 159) in the classroom by their unequal sociocultural positions and unheard voices. Gass and Varonis (1986) observed unequal participation in which Japanese male students were dominant in interactions when paired with Japanese female students. Cochran (1996), Holmes (1994), Jule (2004), and

Vandrick (1994; 1995) encouraged ESL and English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) teachers to pay attention to females' equal time to talk in the classroom. These suggestions may fall into an assumption that the more participation in learners' interaction, the better opportunities for language learning (Brown & Rodgers, 2002).

Ehrlich (1997) pointed out that treating women as victims in and through social practices is not consistent with the notion of gender as dynamic. Freeman and McElhinny (1996) declared that overemphasizing men's power may fail to take into account women's sources for resistance, which women create the possibilities for developing alternative ways of interaction. Tannen, Kendall, and Adger (1997) mentioned that the value of equal participation in class varies by culture. For example, Chinese students spend more time on note-taking than discussion in classes. They usually do not speak up until teachers invite their participation. Gender patterns may vary by cultural contexts (Connell, 2002). Suggestions for increased time for female learners' participation are based on Western values.

Whether equal amount of time to talk between males and females is beneficial to their learning still remains debatable. Connell (2002) claimed that gender is changing as human activities create new situations for social practices. The solution to solve the conflict between male and female students' equal chance for participation may move from a focus on equal amount of time for participation to a focus on what social practices allow them to participate (Cameron, 1996), and on how to create those practices for gender practices and language learning.

The research on the influence of gendered interactional styles on second language learning is still open. Gass and Varonis (1986) examined sex differences between

Japanese learners of English in an intensive language program in the United States of America (U.S.A). Ten dialogues of pairs were tape recorded, including four pairs of males and females, three pairs of females, and three pairs of males. Participants completed one conversation task and two picture-description tasks. Males and females' speech were analyzed into four ways: negotiation of meaning, topics, dominance, and interpersonal phenomena. Gass and Varonis applied the study of sex differences and language learning to second language acquisition and concluded that males' dominance produced more opportunities for "comprehensible output," while females benefited from the conversation for "comprehensible input" (p. 349).

However, the implication of interactional styles on second language acquisition was based on the interpretation of Krashen's (1980) comprehensible input and Swain's (1985) comprehensible output, not based on the observation of the process of interaction or the ESL learners' perspectives on their second language learning. In addition, Gass and Varonis (1986) analyzed dyads based on a fixed and categorized gender.

Ehrlich (1997) suggested that future research is needed to focus on not just the complexity of gender practice in social contexts, but more on its influence on second language acquisition. For example, research may address what aspects of second language learning are influenced by different interactional styles. In the vein of Ehrlich's suggestion, research may expand our understanding from language and gender in sociolinguistics to second language learning.

This study contributes to the knowledge of the processes of peer interaction in ESL and EFL pedagogy. Language instructors might benefit from the findings to become more aware of the differences of interactional styles among male and female language

learners in different contexts. They might also be aware of how gendered interactional styles influence second language learning. Moreover, the findings are crucial for ESL learners as well. They, as outsiders, have an improved understanding of peer interaction from a microdynamic view. Additionally, ESL and EFL curriculum developers benefit from these findings. They can create conversation dialogues, activities, and exercises for language learners by understanding the dynamics of interaction between genders and the focus on the role of gender in second language learning.

Statement of the Problem

Researchers have investigated issues of gender in language teaching and learning. Willett (1996) and Davis and Skilton-Sylvester (2004) supported the need for gender studies in TESOL, while Ehrlich (1997) called for the same needs in SLA. Further, Piller and Pavlenko (2001) pointed out “gender-blindness of SLA research” (p. 3) due to the dominant approaches of psycholinguistics and Universal Grammar. Davis and Skilton-Sylvester (2004) suggested that future research needs to examine “how the gendered subjectivities of men and women are not polar opposites, but complex, multiple, interconnected, locally defined, and intrinsically connected to unequal power structures” (p. 396).

The traditional view of gender has been challenged as a fixed and polarized dichotomy (Bing & Bergvall, 1998). Ehrlich (1997) and Bing and Bergvall (1998) criticized research that presupposed a dichotomy between male and female, which would be problematic if researchers generalized or oversimplified their findings to predict gender behavior as universal.

Studies of language and gender have been characterized by three different

approaches: *deficit*, *dominance*, and *difference*. According to Coates (2004), the *deficit approach* is characterized as "women's language" (p. 6), which is compared with the norm of male language. The *dominant approach* sees male speech as dominant and female speech as subordinate. The *difference approach* focuses on subcultures to which men and women belong. Bing and Bergvall (1998) criticized that the prevalence of three approaches "all suggest dichotomies separated by clear boundaries" (p. 506). Litosseliti (2006) argued that these three approaches focus on language differences between women and men rather than on how language is constructed through interaction.

Concerned with gender and interaction, Jule (2004) studied a Canadian Punjabi girl in a second-grade ESL classroom. Jule claimed "gender as a factor in predicting language use" (p. 77). This was a fixed view of gender behavior. Holmes (1994) analyzed the features of male and female interactions disregarding the context of the interaction and speaker's cultural background. Holmes assumed that balanced time during participation allowed for equality in the learning experience. She suggested that educators teach men supportive strategies for achieving fairness in all-male groups, indicating women have already had these strategies. However, Holmes' suggestions were not based on the dynamic view of gender. Whether increasing the amount of speaking time for female learners will help their learning still remains debatable. Moreover, Aries (1998) pointed out several problems in past studies of gender differences and interaction, such as: overlooking gender differences within male and female groups, polarizing differences, lacking explanation of contexts related to behaviors, and overlooking the influences of social status, gender roles and stereotypes in gender differences.

Coates (2004) recommended that future research needs to emphasize the dynamic

aspects of interaction from a social constructionist perspective. Tannen et al. (1997) claimed that recent research on gendered styles has focused on peer interactions. Davis and Skilton-Sylvester (2004) mentioned the need to explore how studies of gender-related social practices contribute to knowledge of language teaching and learning. Furthermore, Nunan (2005) pointed out that the new trend of studies in second language learning has shifted from traditional psycholinguistics to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which provides "a psycholinguistic explanation of the sociocultural circumstances and processes through which pedagogy can foster learning that leads to language development" (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000, p. 97). This study will thus use the *diversity* framework of gender identities and practices and *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) to explore the role of gender in peer interaction and its influence on second language learning.

Background and Need for the Study

U.S. universities design ESL programs for limited English speakers. These language learners are generally categorized as non-matriculated students who improve only their English language skills, matriculated students who are conditionally accepted into a degree program, and exchange students who study language and their academic majors concurrently for one or two semesters.

The goal of an ESL speaking class focuses on academic learning and communicative skills to meet ESL learners' needs. Group work or pair work is highly valued as one of the most important academic learning activities in Western culture. Group work also reflects the trend of second and foreign language teaching for learner-centered curriculum, which may foster learners' linguistic production (Anton, 1999). The challenge is for these students from non-English speaking countries, such as Asian

countries, to adjust their learning to U.S. academic learning style. Moreover, they have to deal with other international students from different cultures and genders during peer interactions. The challenge is not only for ESL learners, but also for the native English speaking instructors who observe, monitor, and evaluate peer interaction across gender and culture in the classroom. Chavez (2001) encouraged future research to address the role of gender in second and foreign language use and learning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is twofold. One is to explore the role of gender in peer interaction in the ESL language classroom. Gender is on "a continuum with indistinct boundaries" and varies by contexts during interaction (Bing & Bergvall, 1998, p. 495). Gender is "the structure of social relations" and cannot be separated from other social identities (Connell, 2002; Pavlenko, 2008). In the ESL classroom, male and female learners from diverse backgrounds in terms of social class, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity are engaged in peer interactions for their assigned language practices. These activities create opportunities for linguistic and social practices where language learners construct gender as well as second language learning (Ehrlich, 1997).

The second purpose of this study is to explore how interactional styles by gender influence ESL learners' second language learning. Language practices in peer groups in the ESL classroom are designed for enhanced language learning. Whether male and female learners' interactional styles may foster or inhibit second language learning will be explored.

Research Questions

Based on the point of view that gender is not separate from other social identities

(Pavlenko, 2008), I planned to understand how gender is intertwined with these identities. I was more interested in discovering where and how gender similarities and differences emerge rather than determining whether gender differences occur. The following research questions explored the role of gender in peer interaction and its influence on ESL students' second language learning:

1. How are gender dynamics manifested in peer interaction?
2. How do discourse functions of interactional styles shaped by gender relate to second language learning?
3. How does gender promote second language learning through scaffolding or hinder second language learning?

Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical frameworks were used in this study: *diversity* framework of language and gender studies; and *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. The *diversity* framework will be used to provide an understanding of language, gender, and the interface between them. The ZPD will be used to understand second language learning through peer interaction.

The new direction of the studies of language and gender, under the *diversity* framework is influenced by the "postmodern turn" in the early 1990s (Pavlenko, 2008). The *diversity* framework provides insights of knowledge in terms of how "language" and "gender" are considered and the relationship between language and gender (Swann, 2003). The interface of language and gender is addressed in several research studies (Bing & Bergvall, 1998; Cameron, 2005; Pavlenko, 2008; Swann, 2003).

In the *diversity* framework, gender is viewed as a social category that is

negotiated through linguistic practices (Bucholtz & Hall, 1995). Gender is not what people “are or have,” but what people “do” (Ehrlich, 1997, p. 422). Gender is “inseparable” from other social identities, such as age, social class, sexual orientation, and ethnicity (Pavlenko, 2008, p. 167). These social identities are intertwined and not represented distinctly as gender, class, race, or ethnicity, in the process of interaction (Swann, 2003).

Language is viewed, under the *diversity* framework, as context-dependent and multifunctional. There is no fixed relationship between linguistic forms and functions whose meanings are changing by context (Bucholtz & Hall, 1995; Pavlenko, 2008; Swann, 2003).

Language and gender interface (Pavlenko, 2008; Swann, 2003). During interaction, people exchange not just the content of the message, but also their self-image and social norms in the structure of social categories (Tannen, 1982). For example, Cameron (1996) suggested that people use different speech styles and may be understood by how they position themselves in the process of social practices rather than simply marking them by the pre-existing gender categories. No one is always masculine or feminine on two extreme points. Individuals vary their speech styles by producing and constructing themselves as a particular gender on “a continuum with indistinct boundaries” (Bing & Bergvall, 1998, p. 495).

The second theoretical framework is one principle of Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or

in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Recently, Lantolf (2005) introduced Vygotsky's theory into the study of second language learning and explained Vygotsky's ZPD as "a projection of a person's developmental future" (p.336). In other words, one who cooperates with knowledgeable persons in the present will be able to work independently in the future.

Ohta (1995) expanded the concept of ZPD in second language acquisition and defined it as "the difference between the L2 learner's developmental level as determined by independent language use, and the higher level of potential development as determined by how language is used in collaboration with a more capable interlocutor" (p. 96). Further, Dunn and Lantolf (1998) explained that ZPD is a "dialectic unity" "of learning-leading-development" where human higher psychological functions take place in interaction (p. 420).

Donato (1994) pointed out the role of second language learners in group work creates opportunities for the "collective acquisition of the second language" (p. 53). Ohta (2000) mentioned that language itself functions as a tool of mediation for human cognitive development, and interaction provides for the process of the development. Ohta argued that language acquisition, from the holistic view of moment-to-moment developmental process, is considered as a unity of learner and environment rather than the inner mind of learners. Language acquisition is understood through collaborative learning in which learners produce their own language and test their hypotheses of language functions during interaction.

Vygotsky (1981) asserted that "social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships" (p. 163). He did not

specifically point out gender in the role of social interaction for cognitive and linguistic development. Yet he was aware of the fundamental principle that social relations contribute to higher mental functions because “internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions” (p. 163). Social relations generate opportunities for internalization in social interaction. Currently, according to the *diversity* framework, gender is considered to be a form of “the structure of social relations” and “a set of practices governed by this structure” that is presented and reflected in social interactions (Connell, 2002, p. 10). In Vygotsky’s vein of internalization, gender as an organization of social relations does have its genetic role to contribute to higher cognitive functions for language learning.

The *diversity* framework of language and gender and Vygotsky’s ZPD offer important shared features which are crucial to guide this study. First, gender and scaffolded help for language development have their dynamic traits. Gender does not have a fixed status, but varies on “a continuum with indistinct boundaries” (Bing & Bergvall, 1998, p. 495). Gender is reconceptualized “as an integral dynamic of social orders” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 147). Similarly, ZPD is considered as an “emergent and open-ended” trait of the learner rather than a static trait of the learner (Nassaji & Swain, 2000, p. 36). Scaffolding within ZPD is in a continual revision process to foster learner’s language development (Johnson, 2004).

Secondly, both frameworks offer a holistic view. Gender is considered as a social category, “inseparable” from other social relations (Pavlenko, 2008). Gender is viewed as a holistic unit of social relations and social identity rather than a biological dichotomy. ZPD is a “dialectic unity” “of learning-leading-development” (Dunn & Lantolf, 1998, p.

420), in which learning and development are not separated but interrelated (Vygotsky, 1978). Language acquisition within the ZPD is considered as a holistic unity of learner and environment rather than only within the inner mind of learners.

Third, these two frameworks assign an interactional process a crucial role for gender practice and second language acquisition. Social interaction provides opportunities for presenting and constructing a particular gender, as well as for developing cognitive activities and linguistic practices.

Furthermore, *diversity* framework and ZPD provide a view of scaffolding, which is gradually conceptualized. West and Zimmerman (1987) claimed that "doing gender furnishes the interactional scaffolding of social structure, along with a build-in mechanism of social control" (p. 147). Gender is a continuing action while interacting with others. Doing gender provides opportunities for gender practices among and between interlocutors which is not unidirectional. ZPD is associated with the concept of scaffolding, which is not unidirectional (Nassaji & Swain, 2000), but a collaborative (Ohta, 2000) and mediated (de Guerreo & Villamil, 2000) learning process.

In sum, the *diversity* framework of gender practice and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory both contribute knowledge of dynamic, holistic, interactional, and scaffolding view of social relations and social interactions. Both frameworks are essential to explain the role of gender in language development through interaction and their relationships.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study focuses on one advanced-level academic communication oral skills class in an ESL program at a university in the U.S.A. The findings cannot be generalized to other ESL classes, which may feature other linguistic foci on writing, reading, and

listening. The ESL learners are non-matriculated students who study only English; matriculated students who are conditionally accepted into degree programs at this university; or exchange students who study in a degree program and will transfer credits to an overseas university, from where they will get their degree. The findings explain how these international students interact with each other across gender and culture. They cannot be expanded to explain immigrants' linguistic and social behavior in other ESL classes.

The ESL students are placed in an advanced level class, according to their official scores of either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency. Their interactional styles cannot be extended to students of beginning or intermediate level. The researcher will only observe one group at a time in each activity and choose the groups of students who are willing to be participants. Therefore, the comparisons between different groups in each activity will not be made.

The size of the class is determined by student enrollment. Students' cultural backgrounds, such as gender, age, ethnicity, race, class, may vary in the class. These may create gaps between the researcher and participants regarding their different sociocultural backgrounds. The researcher has to be consciously aware of these differences and minimize the gaps when interpreting data. The researcher also has to be cautious to make assumptions due to any possible misunderstanding of social norms in the societies where students come from.

The instructor of the ESL class designs the classroom activities and determines the tasks and goals of activities. The instructor arranges the group patterns, group

members, and gender composition of a group. These will establish boundaries when the researcher analyzes data only in some certain contexts. To minimize the limitation, gender composition of a group and group members will be priorities for observation. For example, I will choose a male or female dominant group if these types of group are arranged. I also will select a variety of paired patterns, such as a group of one male and one female, two females, or two males. I will consider cultural backgrounds of group members for selection.

I, the researcher, am a middle-aged Chinese female. As Willett (1996) described gender "research as gendered practice" (p.344), I have no absolutely neutral role when I unconsciously position myself in the process of this study. For example, I may reflect my gender identities and practices by asking research questions, choosing theoretical frameworks, selecting methods, interpreting data, and drawing implications. The researcher's gender could provide access to more or less data while interacting or interviewing with male and female students from different cultural backgrounds.

The other factor to limit this study is when students are engaged in peer interaction, background noises may occur. This might possibly cause unintelligible utterances when the researcher transcribes the audio tapes. I will discuss this issue with the instructor to separate groups in different areas of the class prior to my observations.

Significance of the Study

The study intends to describe the process of peer interaction in the ESL classroom. One of the goals is that the findings will explain the role of gender in interactional styles during peer interaction. The other is to describe the influence of gender-related interactional styles on SLA from a sociocultural perspective. The major findings will

contribute to the practical knowledge of ESL and EFL pedagogy. It is hoped that these findings will help to fill the gap, what Piller and Pavlenko (2001) called “gender-blindness of SLA research” (p. 3).

The findings will be beneficial for in-service and pre-service ESL instructors to understand the role of gender in peer interaction and second language learning. The study may increase ESL teachers’ awareness of peer interaction as social and linguistic practices. This study will also help EFL teachers recognize that the learning activities in an English-speaking country may vary from their own teaching experiences in Asia. The difference may help EFL teachers adjust their teaching activities for potential students who will pursue study abroad, for a better adoption of learning.

The findings would also benefit learners, making them aware of the ways in which interactional styles vary by gender and other sociocultural factors. Understanding these interactional styles gives students more control over the experience of language learning. In addition, ESL and EFL curriculum developers will benefit from the findings which will help them to design conversation activities by considering gender dynamics of interaction in the language classroom.

Definition of Terms

In this study, the following terms are used as defined below:

Gender	“gender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices (governed by this structure) that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes” (Connell, 2002, p. 10).
Sex	refers to physical characteristics which are biologically determined as males and females.
Peer Interaction	“Learner-to-learner communication in task-based group work” (Brown & Rodgers, 2002, p. 80).

Interactional styles	is also termed as conversational styles, which refers to “the unique collection of communicative habits that individuals develop—all the ways they say what they mean—influenced by regional and cultural background, ethnicity, class, age, and gender, as well as numerous other influences such as sexual orientation, profession, and personality” (Tannen et al., 1997, p. 75).
Second Language Acquisition (SLA)	refers to “the process by which people develop proficiency in a second or foreign language” (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 2002, p. 407).
Second Language (L2)	refers to a language other than the speaker’s mother tongue. It actually refers to a second, third, or fourth language (Ellis, 1994, 1997).
English as a Second Language (ESL)	refers to “the role of English for immigrant and other minority groups in English-speaking countries. These people may use their mother tongue at home or among friends, but use English at school and at work” (Richards et al., 2002, p. 155).
Second Language classroom	refers to “The L2 (second language) classroom can be defined as the gathering, for a given period of time, of two or more persons (one of whom generally assumes the role of instructor) for the purposes of language learning” (van Lier, 1988, p. 47).
English as a Foreign Language (EFL)	refers to “the role of English in countries where it is taught as a subject in schools but not used as a medium of instruction in education nor as a language of communication (e.g. in government, business, or industry) within the country” (Richards et al., 2002, p. 155).
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)	The term is “used, particular in the USA, to describe the teaching of English in situations where it is either a SECOND LANGUAGE or a

> FOREIGN LANGUAGE. In British usage this is usually referred to as ELT, i.e. English Language Teaching" (Richards et al., 2002, p. 473).

Summary

In the field of second language teaching and learning, gender studies are needed (Davis & Skilton-Sylvester, 2004; Ehrlich, 1997; Willett, 1996). To determine whether there is equal participation among students, the studies of gender-related styles have focused on peer interactions in small groups (Tannen et al., 1997). However, women have tended to be viewed as passive victims in classroom participation (Ehrlich, 1997). Gender is generally ignored in the studies of SLA due to the prevalence of psycholinguistics and Universal Grammar (Piller & Pavlenko, 2001). Most importantly, the view of gender has recently shifted from the three approaches, *deficit*, *dominant*, *difference*, to a broader view of *diversity* framework (Cameron, 2005).

To fill the gap of gender studies in language teaching and learning, this study will focus on how gender is varied in the process of different task-based activities rather than on the differences between men and women. Further, the study will discover whether gendered interactional styles will foster or inhibit language learning in peer interaction. The study will add insights to the knowledge of gender in peer interactions in ESL pedagogy. The findings will help ESL and EFL instructors, learners, and curriculum developers to be aware of the role of gender in peer interaction and second language learning.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Silent Interaction by Hsiu-Lien Chu (2009)
Interaction with prior researchers
Silently through words
Constructing my knowledge
Shaping my ideas
Of
Gender and Second Language Learning

Introduction

This study explores the role of gender in peer interaction when ESL students work in pairs or groups during classroom practices. This study also investigates gendered interactional styles as a linguistic mediational tool in ESL students' second language learning when they scaffold within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in peer interaction. According to the research purpose, the literature review encompasses three sections: gender and interaction; sociocultural theory and second language acquisition; and gender and second language acquisition. The first section, gender and interaction, addresses the definition of gender, approaches of language and gender, studies of language and gender on interactional styles, and gender studies of interaction in the ESL classroom. The second section, sociocultural theory and second language acquisition, focuses on a fundamental concept of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, ZPD, and scaffolding within the ZPD in the second language classroom. The third session emphasizes gender studies in second language acquisition.

Gender and Interaction

The definition of gender guides the direction of gender studies. Four approaches of language and gender have developed based on the view of gender. The influential

studies done by Maltz and Borker (1982) and Tannen (1982) interpret gendered styles in relation to cultural differences. Gender interaction in the ESL classroom focused more on female students rather than on male students. However, interaction should be considered from holistic perspectives rather than on one side.

Gender

The assumptions about gender are embedded in asking research questions, selecting methodology, and interpreting findings, which may cause inconsistency in the studies of gender (Wodak & Benke, 1997). Various views of gender conflict in common usage and in reality. Sex refers to biological characteristics and distinguishes human as males and females, whereas gender tends to be considered as cultural difference based on their biological distinctions, such as masculinities and femininities (Coates, 2004). However, the binary distinction does not reflect the real world of human behavior due to exclusion of differences among men and among women (Connell, 2002). Connell pointed out that the problem is not a focus on bodies, but the interpretation of cultural patterns is simply expressed by biological differences. Gender tends to be considered as unchanging because individual actions are forced by the power of social structures. Cameron (1996) stated that gender has been viewed as a given characteristic of the individual prior to the behavior. The consequence is to treat gender differences as a natural phenomenon. Bing and Bergvall (1998) indicated that the oversimplification of gender as polarized may reinforce stereotype of human behavior and ignore the diversity of gender practices.

Cameron (1996) mentioned that gender refers to “an extraordinarily intricate and multilayered phenomena—unstable, contested, intimately bound up with other social divisions” (p. 34). Coates (2004) defined gender as “socially constructed categories based

on sex" that portrays humans "with a range of femininities and masculinities" (p. 4). Gender is not fixed and unchanging, but a plural and dynamic social arrangement which is actively produced in the process of interaction. Moreover, masculinity and femininity are not opposite attributes of the individual, but separate dimensions which coexist and vary by contexts (Wodak & Benke, 1997). The meaning of these two dimensions can be understood, for example, when masculinity is considered in relation to femininity and in relation to all possible gender relations which may occur in specific contexts (Coates, 2004). Connell (2002) claimed that "gender relations do include difference and dichotomy" (p. 9), but also include other patterns in daily life and social practices. This view of gender does not focus on cultural difference, but on social relations (Connell, 2002). This view of gender does not refuse our common usage, but is rooted in its fundamental basis and broadens to a social structure in the societal system.

Consequently, with this view of gender, Coates (2004) noticed that language and gender studies have shifted from how gender is related to linguistic features to how language practices accomplish gender. Pavlenko (2008) mentioned four major themes of future research design based on the *diversity* framework of gender identities and gender practices. First, studies may address on comparison of the same gender with different social identities, for example, upper-middle-class suburban girls and their female counterparts from low-income urban areas. Second, future studies may emphasize how the members of a particular community use language to produce, challenge, or resist gender. Third, studies may have a focus on how speakers use language to cross gender boundaries. The last direction of research may approach how gender relations shape linguistic choices. Connell's (2002) view of gender is the fundamental concept to guide

language and gender studies.

Language and Gender

Since 1975, sociolinguists have shed light on language and gender. Coates (2004) provided three reasons for the emergence of language and gender research as a subfield of sociolinguistics. First, traditional dialectology tended to select male rather than female informants. Secondly, the linguistic variation shifted from standard to non-standard varieties, which focused on social class, ethnicity or age of minority groups, but not on women. Third, the influence of the women's movement against inequality between men and women had an impact on society as well as academic studies. Lakoff (1975) and Thorne and Henley (1975) have contributed major insights concerning language and gender to the field of sociolinguistics (Freeman & McElhinny, 1996).

In the past three decades, the four different approaches that have characterized language and gender studies by their historical order are *deficit*, *dominance*, *difference*, and *dynamic or social constructionist* (Coates, 2004), also interchangeable with *diversity*. The *deficit* approach is characterized as "women's language" (p. 6), which is compared to the norm of male language. Lakoff (1975) described perception of women's language as deficient, such as hedges and talking with exaggerated intonation (Coates, 2004). The problem of this approach is that women are viewed as disadvantaged language users by presenting their uncertainty and powerlessness (Talbot, 1998), whereas men carries more power and use prestigious language (Wodak & Benke, 1997).

The *dominant* approach views men's speech as dominant and women's speech as subordinate (Coates, 2004). Women negotiate their powerless position when interacting with men, whereas men reveal their social privilege in language use (Cameron, 1996).

Language patterns are considered as expressions of social order in a patriarchal society (Talbot, 1998). Freeman and McElhinny (1996) indicated that this approach still employs a negative view of women's language, but explains their language status as an influence of social subordination.

There are two problems in the *dominance* approach. First, this approach treats men as dominant over all women across all contexts (Talbot, 1998). Second, the *dominance* approach presupposes a direct one-to-one relationship between linguistic forms and functions, but a linguistic form may have a variety of possible meanings depending on its social contexts (Freeman & McElhinny, 1996). Freeman and McElhinny also claimed that language does not simply reflect social identities, but is used for negotiation and construction of social identities in interaction.

The *difference* approach focuses on the subcultures to which men and women belong. This approach applies a more positive view to women's language as an expression of their culture (Freeman & McElhinny, 1996). Men and women use language differently due to the segregation of children's play into same sex groups (Cameron, 1996). This interpretation explains that misunderstanding between men and women exists because they are not aware of different language styles (Talbot, 1998).

Talbot (1998) pointed out several major problems of the *difference* approach. First, this approach considers that men and women are "equal-but-different" (p. 137), but ignores asymmetrical power relations in society. Second, the explanation of the segregation of boys' and girls' social organization is overemphasized. This model assumes that male-female childhood interactions take place primarily in same-sex groups, discounting interactions among siblings and in classrooms for example. The third

problem is the assumption that miscommunication occurs due to unawareness of different interactional styles. Most importantly, according to Freeman and McElhinny (1996), the problem of the *difference* approach is that it does not challenge the power structure, but views sex differences as "biologically given or socially unalterable" (p. 239).

Research on these three approaches assumed that gender is based on a male-female dichotomy (Bing and Bergvall, 1998), focusing on language differences between women and men rather than on how language is constructed through interaction (Litosseliti, 2006). Cameron (1996) pointed out that the *deficit* and *difference* approaches considered gender identities to precede linguistic practices. Pavlenko (2008) claimed that the *difference* and *dominance* approaches "ignore ethnic, racial, social, and cultural diversity that mediates gendered behaviors, performances, and outcomes" (p.166).

Uchida (1992) suggested that the importance of a framework is to see that the concept of gender is holistic and dynamic and that gender is articulated through language use (Wodak & Benke, 1997). The current use of *diversity* framework emphasizes the dynamic aspects of interactions, drawing from social constructionist perspectives (Coates, 2004). The influence of poststructuralism on language and gender studies has shifted the view of gender from fixed and static to dynamic; thus gender identities are constructed from moment to moment in the process of interaction (Talbot, 1998). The sense of self is embedded and reflected in language choices and usage. Most importantly, gender identities represent not only the sense of self, but also how others see that self as a particular gender. Gender is constructed and negotiated in a dynamic way scaffolded on the interaction with interlocutors and the larger social environment.

Gender and Interactional Styles

Two aspects of sociolinguistic research focused on differences between men and women were examined: speech behavior on phonology and interactional styles in discourse (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Wodak & Benke, 1997). Maltz and Borker (1982) provided a framework to analyze gender differences in interactional styles. They explained that men and women use language in different ways due to conversational patterns learned from childhood. According to Maltz and Borker, girls tend to create close and equal relationships, criticize indirectly without aggressiveness, and interpret other girls' speech accurately. Similarly, women's speech shows a continuity of girls' talk. Women tend to use pronouns, "you" and "we" for inclusion, use nods or minimal response for engagement, give comments or questions for showing interest, get a chance to talk for support, respond to what has been said, and link their utterance to the previous talk.

In contrast, Maltz and Borker (1982) pointed out that boys tend to establish their status of dominance, attract an audience, and assert themselves and their opinions as an audience. To some extent, men's speech patterns are similar to that of boys. Men perform well for audiences with narrative jokes or stories, speak loudly and aggressively for argument, and use verbal aggression, such as insults and put-downs, as acceptable norms among male friends.

Gender is embedded in interactional styles which are rooted in family communicative habits and ethnic social norms. Tannen (1982) explored social differences in expectations of indirectness, which is a feature of male-female conversational style by Greeks, Americans, and Greek-Americans. Her hypothesis was based upon the use of

conversational strategy as an element of ethnicity. The research method consisted in systematically questioning these three groups to observe any cross-cultural differences in interpretation of indirectness. The results showed that Greeks tended to use more indirect interpretation of questions than Americans, and that Greek-Americans were in-between, but closer to the Greeks.

Tannen (1982) argued that communication carries not only the content of message, but also conveys the social norms. Conversational style is learned by family communicative habits, carries the development of ethnic stereotypes, and operates unconsciously and habitually. The retention of ethnic communicative strategies may still exist, even if third generation Greeks lose their Greek language.

Gender and Interaction in the ESL classroom

Govindasamy and David (2004) investigated male ESL students' academic performance, classroom participation and goal-oriented motivation in a female-dominated Islamic university in Malaysia. Their study focused on male ESL students unlike the majority of gender research (Holmes, 1994; Jule, 2004; Vandrick, 1994) on female students. Govindasamy and David considered gender as two groups, males and females, and compared differences between them in these three areas of study.

In examining patterns of interaction between males and females, Govindasamy and David (2004) analyzed turn taking during group discussions of abstract and concrete topics in a total of six sessions in one male-dominated and one female-dominated ESL class. The results showed that males dominated in the male-dominated class as well as females dominated in the female-dominated class. Further, Govindasamy and David mentioned that females' dominance was not inhibited, even in a religious learning

environment. Males' lower level of participation in the female-dominated class was related to the lower numbers of males in class.

In Govindasamy and David's (2004) study, the involvement of males and females in group discussion was influenced by social contexts in which students participated. More specifically, students' participation was related to the composition of gender in the classroom. However, this study lacked a microanalytical view of interaction to examine whether different composition of gender in groups influences males and females participation.

Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Acquisition

Long's (1985) interactional hypothesis has been extensively examined in second language acquisition. Ellis (1999) argued that the interactional hypothesis is based on one type of interaction—negotiation— and does not concern individual differences such as interlocutors' negotiation styles. Ellis further argued for a need for studies of language acquisition from a social view, adopted from a holistic perspective of discourse. By using qualitative research, language acquisition could be understood from how participants negotiate their roles and identities through interaction in particular settings.

Ellis (1999) pointed out the need for a social view of second language acquisition. The aim of this session is to understand an essential concept of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In addition, this review also provides insights of scaffolding within the ZPD in the second language classroom.

Sociocultural Theory

The central concept of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory is that human cognitive development originates from dialogic interaction in nature and is constructed

through the interactional process with the members of the culture. Social interaction creates an opportunity to initiate and shape the development of higher mental thinking and the acquisition of complex skills (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Nassaji & Cumming, 2000; Nassaji & Swain, 2000). Sociocultural theorists view learning "as a fundamentally social act, embedded in a specific cultural environment" (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000, p. 52). However, de Guerrero & Villamil claimed that not all social interactions result in development, only when interactions operate within the ZPD and the members of interactions provide scaffolded assistance.

ZPD is a well-known concept of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2005). The concept of ZPD originally arose from Vygotsky's observation of children whose mental development was measured by IQ tests (Lantolf, 2005). Vygotsky argued that IQ tests only focus on those abilities children have already developed, but not on those abilities that will develop in the future. The ZPD emphasizes the revolutionary process for assessing children's mental abilities (Driscoll, 2005). De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) mentioned that two developmental levels reside within the ZPD: the actual developmental level and the potential developmental level, which can be observed when the learner gains assistance from a more knowledgeable person, either an adult or a more capable peer.

Vygotsky (1978) defined the basic feature of the ZPD as "functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state" (p. 86) and describes human higher cognitive development "prospectively" (p. 87). The important feature of the ZPD is not a specific task that is carried out through social interaction, but the higher cognitive functions which

emerge as a result of that interaction (Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Nassaji & Cumming, 2000).

Lantolf and Appel (1994) described the relationship between regulation and the ZPD. In the initial level of mental growth, called *object-regulation*, children are incapable of manipulating the environment around them. In the next level of mental development, called *other-regulation*, children operate their surroundings and carry out some tasks with the assistance from an adult or a capable peer through dialogic interaction. As children take over certain tasks independently, they have reached a higher level of development, *self-regulation*. Vygotsky (1981) described the transition from other-regulation to self-regulation as a *general law of cultural development*.

> Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. (p. 163)

Nassaji and Swain (2000) asserted that the learners in the ZPD do not carry out a "fixed" (p. 36) characteristic, but dynamic and potential characteristics emerge and unfold through interaction in nature. The ZPD provides opportunities for learners to expand their potential for learning. Frawley (1997) argued that intersubjectivity and asymmetry are two features of the ZPD. The individual is engaged in a joint process with at least one person which discussing their differences and sharing meanings, then they become intersubjective. Asymmetry appears when one is more knowledgeable and leads the other less knowledgeable person to reach a higher level of cognitive growth. Language is the key to construct and maintain intersubjectivity and asymmetry.

Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning is neither equal nor parallel to development. Learning and development do not coincide, but are interrelated. Learning creates an internal developmental process within the ZPD, which enables children to interact with

adults or capable peers, consequently, resulting in mental development. Human cognitive development occurs during social interaction and lags behind the learning process. Lantolf (2005) maintained Vygotsky's idea and described that development is not linear, but an irregular and unpredictable revolutionary process.

Language within the ZPD is viewed as a cultural artifact, which carries the meanings of social and historical development, and serves as a tool to mediate a joint process on the interpsychological plane and a mental process on the intrapsychological plane (Lantolf & Appeal, 1994; Ohta, 2000).

The ZPD has been used with the concept of scaffolding, first used by Vygotsky and Luria in terms of how adults bring cultural meanings to children (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). Scaffolding is used to describe an adult or more capable peer to adjust the complexity of a task to help a novice learner achieve a higher level of performance. However, Ohta (2000) stated that scaffolding is a collaborative process. Johnson (2004) pointed out that scaffolding does not have a fixed status, but is in a continual process of revision to foster learner's internalization of knowledge. Most importantly, Nassaji and Swain (2000) claimed that scaffolding is not unidirectional, but "a joint process constructed on the basis of the learner's need" (p. 36). The learner and the expert discover the learner's ZPD during collaboration. Johnson (2004) summarized Donato's (1994) study and concluded that scaffolded help is not only provided by experts, but also by peer learners. In addition, Nassaji and Cumming (2000) mentioned that peer students are capable of constructing a ZPD through scaffolding, even without experts among them.

Tudge (1992) stated that the ZPD does not always lead to development due to the nature of interaction which may develop or impede learner's development. Johnson (2004)

pointed out that learning and development would not occur if too much help is offered or if help is withdrawn too soon. To determine a learner's ZPD, what the learner can master without assistance and what the learner can achieve with assistance, is "an act of negotiated discovery" (Ohta, 2000, p. 54) between the learner and the expert. Ohta described that the negotiated help is from explicit to implicit, and is offered when the learner invites or requests help, and is withdrawn when the learner can reach self-regulation or when the learner rejects help. The appropriate help is predicted by the interlocutor's sensitivity to the learner's needs.

The concept of ZPD has been applied to language teaching and learning. However, researchers have different interpretations of the ZPD. Lightbown and Spada (1999) viewed ZPD as an assisted performance. Lantolf (2005) pointed out that this view may limit ZPD to a learner's performance with assistance, but exclude the view of what the learner will achieve independently in the future. Furthermore, Lantolf explained that "learning is assisted performance, whereas development is the ability to regulate mental and social activity" (p. 336).

Kinginger (2002) illustrated three interpretations of the ZPD in foreign education in the U.S.: "skills," "scaffolding," and "metalinguistic" interpretation (pp. 252-256). In the "skills" interpretation, the ZPD is viewed as the transmission of certain knowledge from the capable person to the learner through social interactions. This view is criticized for its oversimplification of internalization (Kinginger, 2002). In the "scaffolding" interpretation, the ZPD is considered as "dialogic" (p. 254) instruction between a teacher and students, such as the discourse structure of IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) or IRE (Initiation-Response-Evaluation) as examples of scaffolding. However, Kinginger

cautioned that the use of ZPD for conventional education needs to consider the distribution of power in the classroom and the nature of development by students' intention and purpose.

In the "metalinguistic" interpretation, ZPD is viewed as "collaborative dialogue," in which language serves as a "reflective" and "metalinguistic" (p. 255) function. This interpretation is a holistic approach to consider collaborative learning as a unique event, allowing learners to manage, test, and investigate their own language production. As a consequence, learners' language development becomes creative and unpredictable through the process of interaction.

Lantolf (2005) pointed out several differences between sociocultural theory and mainstream approaches in Second Language Acquisition. In mainstream approaches, language is defined as a set of linguistic structures, which functions as a symbolic artifact for thoughts. The "autonomous knower" (p. 350) plays a central role in the learning process which occurs on the same route and rate for all learners. However, sociocultural theorists believe language emerges and is shaped through the process of interaction. Language is used as an expression of an individual's thoughts. Human agency, a unity of the learner and interlocutor, is the core of learning. The route and rate of learning vary by a learner's goals, motives, and his/her ZPDs. De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) mentioned that Vygotsky recognized that others and language, as a cognitive tool of social mediation, contribute to the process of learning.

Sociocultural theory assumes that language acquisition occurs in the interaction of the knower and learner, while other interactionists assume that modified input serves as the "linguistic raw material" for learners to acquire language "internally and invisibly"

(Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 44). Dunn and Lantolf (1998) and Lantolf (2005) pointed out the misinterpretation that Krashen's notion of i+ 1, which means current competence and beyond, is equal to ZPD. There are similarities and differences between the concepts of ZPD and i+ 1. Walsh (2006) claimed that both theories believe that learning takes place when input is slightly higher than the current level of the learner. Lantolf (2005) argued that in Krashen's view language acquisition can be predictable, whereas in Vygotsky's view development is a historical process that cannot be predicted.

Dunn and Lantolf (1998) pointed out an important implication of the ZPD in second language learning. Second language learners create an extra chance to try and use a new cognitive tool for meaning-making. Their accents and grammatical, lexical, or pragmatic failures cannot be viewed only as flaws of learning, but as the process of testing the linguistic tool while they are negotiating or establishing a new identity and gaining self-regulation. de Guerrero and Villamil's (2000) study of second language peer revision between a reader and a writer presented that the writer's attitude to gain help and willingness to consider his peer's suggestions had achieved mutual scaffolding.

However, hindrance may occur while applying the ZPD in the second language learning. Lim and Jacobs (2001) observed that students from traditional teacher-fronted learning background tended to doubt their peers' ability to provide scaffolded help. Tudge (1992) concluded certain factors that influence the ZPD in peer interaction, such as age, motivation, and the degree of mutual involvement and equal relationship, the extent of engagement in task. Tudge suggested researchers to consider the circumstances that may lead to children regress during interaction rather than interpreting the ZPD always leads to higher development.

Scaffolding in the Second Language Classroom

Ohta (2000) recognized that the trend of studies on the role of interaction in second language learning has been to investigate how native speakers or experts, such as teachers or tutors, provide help for novices, and how second language learners support collaborative learning when they work on assigned practices. Studies of scaffolded help provided by adult experts have demonstrated that scaffolding existed in face-to-face interactions (Anton, 1999; Nassaji & Swain, 2000), as well as in written dialogue journals (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000). The effectiveness of scaffolding in face-to-face interactions has been compared in the learner-centered classroom approach as opposed to the teacher-centered approach (Anton, 1999), and in negotiated help rather than random help (Nassaji & Swain, 2000).

Anton (1999) investigated interactive exchanges between teachers and learners in an Italian class with a teacher-centered approach and a French class with a learner-centered approach for a semester at a university. The analysis focused on the context of discourse by using language as mediation for scaffolding, which fostered learners' cognitive development. The study showed how teachers and students used a variety of communicative moves and linguistic forms to achieve second language learning. The result showed that the learner-centered class created more opportunities for negotiation than the teacher-centered one.

Nassaji and Swain (2000) examined the effect of negotiated and random help provided by tutors within the learner's ZPD on studying English articles in an ESL program at a university in Canada. Data were collected when tutors worked with two Korean female learners of English on their English compositions. Microgenesis and

macrogenesis were used to analyze the discourse of the tutorial exchanges within one tutorial session and across sections. Quantitative methods were used to examine the production of correctness. The results presented that negotiated help was more effective than random help to produce correct productions of English articles. The learner also benefited from random help when explicit rather than implicit prompts were provided.

Nassaji and Cumming (2000) conducted a case study of a 6-year-old Farsi-speaking ESL boy and a Canadian female teacher interacting through written dialogue journals over ten months to explain features of the ZPD in second language teaching and learning. Nassaji and Cumming used a scheme of language functions to analyze ninety-five exchanges in their written interactions. They documented and interpreted how the ZPD was formed by presenting not only frequencies of language functions, but also discourse choices that the teacher selected to match the young boy's interactional style. Two features of the ZPD were salient in the written interactional context: continuing intersubjectivity and asymmetric scaffolding. Nassaji and Cumming suggested that future researchers combine different methods, such as observation, text analyses, and interviews, to realize precisely and deeply the development of teaching and learning.

Scaffolding is provided not only by teachers or tutors, but also by peers, such as other second language learners. Donato (1994) asserted that second language learners are capable of providing scaffolded help. The studies of peer scaffolding have been conducted in pair groups, such as a pair of males (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000), a pair of male and female (Ohta, 2000), and pairs of females (Lim & Jacobs, 2001). Moreover, Donato's study (1994) focused on scaffolding in a group of three students, but their genders were not mentioned in the study in which gender became invisible. The influence

of gender (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000) and socio-affective factors, such as students' adjustment from the teacher-centered to student-centered approach of learning, and their resistance to peer assistance (Lim & Jacobs, 2001) on peer scaffolding, need to be considered.

De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) observed the mechanisms of strategies used for creating an interpsychological plane when two intermediate ESL college male students worked as a reader and a writer to collaboratively revise a written text. A microgenetic method was used for analysis of interaction. The results showed that scaffolding in peer revision was mutual. De Guerrero and Villamil raised two questions regarding the possibility of whether gender and culture influence scaffolding and language development: Is the gender of pairs a variable in the language development while peer interaction mediated collaborative help? Is culture reflected in scaffolding mechanisms in a particular community?

Ohta (2000) used microanalysis to examine the interactional mechanisms of assistance in the ZPD as two university-level learners of Japanese completed an oral translation task. Ohta noticed that task design cannot determine learners' language learning activities in the nature of interaction. Even though the translation task lacked communicative purposes, two learners created their opportunities to construct the meanings of difficult grammar. Ohta suggested that analysis of learner activity would be crucial for investigating the nature of learning activity and its relations to task design and language development.

Lim and Jacobs (2001) examined peer scaffolding provided by second language learners during dyadic interaction at a girls' secondary school in Singapore. Eighteen

female students were from Mainland China and Hong Kong, and one from Korea. Lim and Jacobs collected journal entries and questionnaires from nineteen students to investigate learners' socio-affective factors in responses to collaborative learning and its effect on dyadic interaction. They randomly selected six students and audio-taped their paired interaction, but only chose one dyad for analysis of discourse strategies within their ZPD. The results suggested that socio-affective factors needed to be considered when students switched from a traditional teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach, with more peer interaction in the classroom. Second language learners tended to doubt their peers' abilities for scaffolded help.

Donato (1994) studied three students of French who collaborated for an open-ended oral activity at an American university. Donato attempted to illustrate how students co-constructed linguistic forms of French and how social interaction resulted in their second language development. A microgenetic analysis, which refers to "the gradual course of skill acquisition" (p.42), was used to discover the mutual scaffolding provided by group members. Donato's study provided the evidence that second language learners could be considered as sources of knowledge and be capable of providing scaffolded help. During the collaborative process, learners not only expanded their linguistic knowledge, but also enhanced their partners' language development. Donato asserted that peer interaction in the second language classroom created an opportunity more for "collaborative acquisition of the second language" (p. 53) than for knowledge exchange.

Researchers of the studies of scaffolding chose activity as an analytical unit to understand the nature of interaction (Ohta, 2000) and used microgenetic analysis (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Donato, 1994; Ohta, 2000) to investigate peer scaffolding.

Nassaji and Cumming (2000) and Lim and Jacobs (2001) selected language functions to analyze data. However, Nassaji and Cumming (2000) suggested that researchers use a variety of methods, such as observation and interviews. These methods could investigate learners' perspectives about potential sociocultural factors during scaffolding. In addition, to understand deeply and precisely the dynamics of peer scaffolding, researchers may include different types of groups in one study, for example including peers and groups of three, rather than focusing on one type.

Gender and Second Language Acquisition

The study of gender and language education has been dominated by the question of which sex performs better, especially focused on gender differences (Schmenk, 2004). Schmenk argued that binary thinking of gender and gendered stereotype of women's interactional features as social and cooperative lead to the assumption of female superiority. Following the vein of binary thinking, males and females tended to be viewed as groups rather than individuals.

Schmenk (2004) asserted that the assumption of female superiority in language learning is derived from outside of the language classroom. Learners mirror their prior knowledge and experience of social belief systems inside the language classroom. In addition, Chavez (2001) and Ehrlich (1997) claimed that the pervasive influence of female superiority in second language learning is derived from research in first language. Furthermore, Schmenk suggested that to consider gender as a dynamic category, stemming from the poststructuralists' view, TESOL researchers need to deal with binary thinking of masculinity and femininity in language learning.

Brantmeier (2003) examined the effect of learners' gender and passage content on

reading comprehension with 78 university students learning Spanish as a second language in the U.S. Two reading passages were selected based on the characters' gender: one was male spectators at a boxing game, and the other one was a frustrated mother and wife visiting her female college roommates. The results demonstrated gender difference on self-reported topic familiarity rating, that women were more familiar with the passage of a frustrated housewife, and men were more familiar with the passage of a boxing game. Topic familiarity influenced their reading comprehension. However, Brantmeier explained this result was due to the difference of gender-related experiences, which fall into the view of gender differences based on men and women coming from different cultures. Brantmeier lacked further explanation of why men and women were familiar with gender-related topics.

Brantmeier (2003) noticed that men and women could not be considered as homogeneous groups; however, in this study, there was no large degree of variation among gender groups, which contrasted with Cameron's (1994) suggestion that the variation within groups is as important as the variation between groups. Brantmeier suggested future research may have a larger group sample to see variation among gender groups. Nevertheless, the problem of lacking the diverse variation among gender groups was not the sample size, but the selection of passage content marked as male-oriented and female-oriented. The selection of passage content may limit the choices of self-reported topic familiarity rating and forced men and women fall into two categories of pre-determined gender-related passage content.

Mori and Gobel (2006) investigated the relationship between motivation and gender in the EFL classroom at a university in Japan. A multivariate analysis of variance

(MANOVA) was performed on four motivational sub-constructs: Integrativeness, Intrinsic value, Amotivation and Attainment value. The result demonstrated that females outnumbered males in Integrativeness, have greater interests in the culture and people of the target language, and are interested in studying or traveling to foreign language-speaking countries. However, gender was viewed as a fixed binary category in this study. Mori and Gobel focused gender differences on a sub-construct of motivation, rather than on how and when the motivation are increased or emerged. This view of gender limited understanding of motivation in second language learning to the differences between cross-sex groups rather than the differences among same-sex groups.

Pae (2004) examined the effect of gender on English reading comprehension of the 1998 National Entrance Examination Exam for Colleges and Universities in Korea. The test items were classified as five major types: Mood/Impression/Tone; Logical Inference; Main Idea/Topic/Title; Fill-in-the-Blank; and Others, such as Grammar and Information Processing. The results indicated that items of Mood/Impression/Tone tended to be easier for female examinees and items of Logical Inference were favor for males regardless of test content. Content analysis of the other three item types, such as Main Idea/Topic/Title, Fill-in-the-Blank, and Information Processing, presented that males tended to perform better on technical topics, whereas females gained higher scores on topics of human subjects.

Gender was viewed as binary thinking in Pae's (2004) study. The fixed categories of gender could not present males and females in a range of reading comprehension on item types and item contents. Pae interpreted the discrepancies between male and female logic inferential abilities may reflect social and educational practices. Pae suggested that

educators should create equal development of academic skills for males and females. Females should be more involved in science-related subjects in favor of representing in academic area of science. However, Pae's suggestion was one-sided on females' learning for logic inference, but ignored males' learning for human subjects. The focus for developing academic skills for reading comprehension may not emphasize which skills males and females need to acquire, but how to create opportunities for more involvement in a variety of social and educational practices.

Phakiti (2003) examined gender differences in strategy use in L2 reading comprehension of a final English test in a Thai university. The results showed that there were no gender differences in performance on L2 reading comprehension and cognitive strategy use, but males reported using more metacognitive strategies than females. Further, Phakiti compared gender differences within the same level of achievement groups sorted by predetermined criteria. No gender differences were found in reading comprehension and use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

Phakiti (2003) pointed out some practical problems when applying the concept of gender to second language research. First, the binary categories of gender have been used by biological differences, but the interpretation of results tended to focus on psychological and social differences rather than physical differences. Second, no theoretical approach of dynamic gender could be applied to the research of L2 reading comprehension and strategy use. Difficulties may occur when researchers design instruments to understand strategy use influenced by the fluidity of gender identity. Third, gender differences could not be generalized across contexts.

Moreover, Phakiti (2003) proposed some solutions for further studies. First, the

biological dichotomy should be maintained when representing learners' characteristics. Second, gender categories could be divided by language achievement levels. Third, gender differences should be interpreted in relation to specific contexts. Finally, the view of gender differences as a universal phenomenon could be overlooked. The importance is to see where and how gender differences emerge, rather than view whether gender differences occur.

However, Phakiti (2003) mentioned that the new approach of dynamic gender stems from a social-constructivist framework, but still views individuals that "position themselves as being masculine or feminine" (p. 678). Gender is dynamic and changing on a range of masculine and feminine rather than shifting on two fixed categories. Moreover, gender is considered as a system of social structures (Connell, 2002). Gender could be viewed as social relations by their achievement levels when they self report their positions as a language learner in learning contexts. This view of gender reveals males and females' relations to social identities as learners interact with other learners in classrooms or schools. The achievement levels represent how learners position themselves rather than a pre-determined criterion by scores.

Rahimpour and Yaghoubi-Notash (2007) examined gender in monologic L2 oral performance in a university in Iran. Oral performance was a part of the course assessment addressed to a male and a female instructor throughout and near the end of the semester. The task topics were based on how participants rated and identified as least cultural inhibiting topic, such as *city and population* and most culturally inhibiting topic, such as *love and marriage*. Oral performance was measured in terms of learners' fluency, complexity, and accuracy. This was a prompted-task given to participants two minutes

before speaking to instructors, who played as addressees. Males and females performed two task topics with two instructors. The results revealed that fluency varied due to gender and topic; complexity varied based on topic; and accuracy indicated statistical difference in terms of participant's gender, instructor's gender, and the interaction between the two.

Rahimpour and Yaghoubi-Notash's (2007) study of gender-related variability in oral performance was conducted in an experimental rather a natural setting. Learners' oral productions were limited by three variables: participants' gender, instructors' gender, and topics. The contexts of oral performance were considered by these variables rather than by one variable of participants' gender, which deepened understanding of the variability of performance. However, gender was still viewed as a binary dichotomy in this study, no matter participants' gender or instructors' gender. Social relations did occur when participants addressed their monologic tasks to instructors in face-to-face situations.

Moreover, Rahimpour and Yaghoubi-Notash (2007) interpreted that female participants performed better on fluency with a female instructor due to the female instructor's cooperative style. However, the instructor's interactional style was not examined in this study. This interpretation was oversimplified and generalized to universal view of female's interactional styles as cooperative. Furthermore, Pavlenko (2001) asserted that "there are no linguistic behaviors, styles, or practices that can be universally associated with a particular gender group" (p. 126).

Sunderland (2000) noticed that even though an updated view of gender has been addressed, much research on gender and language tended to view gender as a binary dichotomy (Kubota, 2003). For example, some gender studies in SLA fall into the

assumptions of gender as binary dichotomy (Pae, 2004; Rahimpour & Yaghoubi-Notash, 2007), fixed categories (Mori & Gobel, 2006), and different cultures (Brantmeier, 2003). Phakiti (2003) expanded gender categories by language achievement levels, but still sorted gender under predetermined and fixed criteria rather than how language learners position themselves. Phakiti's perspective on gender contradicted the dynamic view of gender. Schmenk (2004) suggested that researchers need to consider individual learners' positioning in their language learning contexts in relations to social and cultural factors.

A substantial number of studies on gender in second language research have highlighted gender differences in cross-sex groups (Brantmeier, 2003; Mori & Gobel, 2006; Oxford, 1995; Pae, 2004; Phakiti, 2003; Rahimpour & Yaghoubi-Notash, 2007). "Gender differences" interact as a basic notion of collocation, in which these two words occur commonly. Gender studies fall into a common-sense approach and assume that differences exist between genders. To see gender differences only within cross-sex groups disregards "gender intragroup differences and intergroup overlap" (Kubota, 2003, p. 34).

Summary

The review of studies on gender and interaction suggests that gender is not a given characteristic, but is constructed by social relations which may vary by context. This view of gender leads to a *diversity* approach of language and gender. The interactional styles are interpreted by a *difference* approach and needs to be reexamined from a *diversity* framework. Gendered interaction in the ESL class may need to be considered broadly rather than narrowly on one side.

The studies of sociocultural theory and second language acquisition have focused on scaffolded help provided by adult experts and peers. However, gender has not yet been

involved in scaffolding and second language acquisition research. Even when gender has been considered in second language acquisition, the inconsistency between definition of gender and interpretation of results still occurs. Gender tends to be viewed as a group identity rather than an individual identity.

The literature review informs my research to reexamine gender styles in the ESL classroom from a *diversity* framework. There is a need for gender studies in researching scaffolding between second language learners from the view of ZPD. In second language learning, gender needs to be considered as social relations, which vary by contexts, rather than as binary groups which are generalized to all individuals.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research by Hsiu-Lien Chu (2009)
Qualitative research
Participants guided my study
Observed them through eyes
Heard them through ears
Open my mind
To see
Gender
From the diverse world

Introduction

Increasingly, gender issues are being considered in the study of TESOL and SLA. Discovering how gender influenced peer interaction in the language classroom cast light on the microdynamic processes between ESL male and female students. In addition, exploring the influence of students' interactional styles on second language learning during peer interaction provided insights for ESL pedagogy.

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was twofold. One was to explore the dynamics of gender in peer interaction in a communicative oral skills class in a university-level ESL program. The other was to discover the influence of interactional styles, such as minimal responses and disagreement, shaped by gender on second language learning. The study focused on understanding the phenomenon of peer interaction between genders and on gaining insights into the influence of peer interaction on the language learning process.

Research Design

This research design was a qualitative study which focused on describing the role of gender in peer interaction as related to language learning experience from learners'

perspectives. Research questions concerned how gender played a role to influence the processes of peer interaction, how interactional styles by gender related to second language learning, and how gender promote second language learning through scaffolding or hinder second language learning through unhelpful interaction.

As recent theories of gender studies have shifted from a *difference* and *dominant* approach to a *diversity* approach, the research design has shifted toward qualitative studies, which are more concerned with the contexts of second and foreign language education (Pavlenko, 2008). Research on second language classrooms has been criticized by addressing issues which are far from teachers and learners' important and direct concerns (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). My research design focused on peer interaction in the second language classroom in an attempt to make research practical and to meet teachers' and learners' needs.

Qualitative analysis has been criticized for using too small samples upon which to draw general conclusions. My study did not attempt to make generalizations about the ESL classroom. Instead, this study was in an attempt to view participants as individuals rather than two groups of males and females and to consider activities in which participants are engaged as specific contexts.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), five characteristics of qualitative research are conducting research in natural settings, collecting words as data, analyzing data inductively, being concerned with process, and making meaning from participants. A qualitative research design helped the researcher to collect in-depth descriptive data in an ESL classroom at a university through three methods: observations, interviews, and documents (Patton, 2002). This qualitative research study helped me to answer research

questions from participants' perspectives, in which people interpret the meaning of reality by their own words (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Research Setting

The research took place in an ESL program at a private university, located in an urban area in Northern California. This university served diverse students from different ethnicities and nationalities. The ESL program had been offering a variety of different classes for non-native English speakers since 1974. Grammar courses focused on accuracy in speaking and writing. Integrated skill courses emphasized intergrating basic language skills in content learning. Oral communication skills were designed to develop fluency and accuracy in pronunciation for daily or academic situations.

Three distinct ESL programs were offered to meet different student needs. First, ESL classes provided high intermediate and advanced level courses for matriculated students who had been conditionally accepted into degree programs or exchange students. Second, intensive English classes offered intermediate and advanced levels for students who were not admitted to the university degree programs. This year-round intensive English program included two 15-week semesters in fall and spring and two six-week sessions in summer. Third, special programs offer courses specifically designed for groups for content learning, such as business English or U.S. culture. However, matriculated, non-matriculated, and exchange students would be placed in the same class if they reached the same English level.

According to the demographic data provided by the ESL coordinator, students must be at least 18 years old or have completed their secondary education to enroll in the ESL program. The total enrollment in the ESL program was 143 in Fall 2008. Eighty-

three percent of students were from Asia, especially from China (42.66 %), Korea (10.49 %), Taiwan (9.79 %), Japan (6.99%), and Thailand (5.59%). More females (53.85%) than males (42.66%) enrolled in this semester except five persons whose sex was unknown.

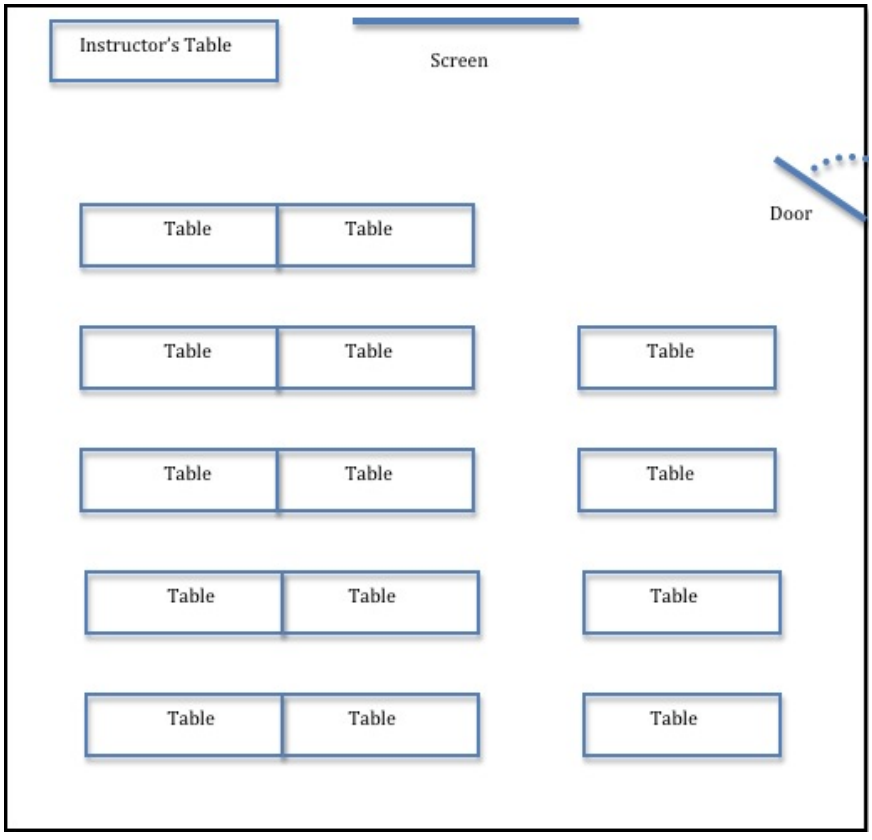
According to the ESL coordinator (personal communication, July 30, 2008), the main instrument used to divide matriculated students into advanced and intermediate levels was the score received on the paper-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Students were placed in the intermediate level with a paper-based TOEFL score of 460 to 500. Students were grouped in the advanced level with a score of 500 to 550. At the end of the semester, students took the institutional TOEFL as an assessment of their language proficiency level. If students of advanced level could not reach a score near 550 or their academic achievement was low, they had to retake ESL classes. Non-matriculated students who had not taken any TOEFL or IELTS, took Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency as an assessment instrument to place them into a suitable class based on their proficiency level.

The researcher followed the ESL program coordinator and instructors' guidance in identifying a communication oral skills class which might create more opportunities for group work than a reading or writing class (personal communication, April, 10, 2008; April 14, 2008; April, 16, 2008; April 18, 2008). The researcher gained access to the setting from the coordinator of the ESL program on April 29, 2008, and received the permission letter on July 30, 2008. The coordinator forwarded my research plan to a female adjunct instructor, who taught a communication oral skills class and welcomed classroom observations. I gained face-to-face permission from the instructor on June 4,

2008. I was allowed to conduct my research in her class during the semester of Fall 2008.

The research setting was an advanced-level academic communication oral skills class for non-matriculated students who took ESL class only, and matriculated and exchange students who took ESL class and their major degree-related courses in the same semester. According to the instructor's description in first class meeting on September 3, 2008, the goal of this class was to have a positive effect on learners' productive skills such as speaking and writing. There were a total of 18 students, eleven females and seven males, enrolled in this class at the beginning of this semester, but two more female students transferred to this class in the middle of the semester.

The following is a physical map of the classroom. Female students tended to sit in the left side area while male students tended to sit in the right side and back area. I sat in the right side of the last row.



Population and Sample

Qualitative research emphasizes in-depth data and uses purposeful sampling, selecting small samples who provide insights into the phenomena related to the research topic (Patton, 2002). This study focused on peer interaction between genders in their language use and language learning. The study described the phenomena of peer interaction. My participants included five male and five female students in the classroom. I conducted this qualitative study in a small-size class of around 20 students. Thus, I chose 10 students as my participants. The number of male and female participants was equal in this class. I explained the purpose of this study to students before I collected consent letters.

Data Collection

My data collection included observations, researcher's journals, interviews, handouts, written notes that students made during discussions, informal conversational interviews, email communications, and the ESL program schedule related to my research topic. Audio-taped recordings were used for classroom observations and individual interviews.

Data collection took place in several steps. I had obtained the ESL program course schedule for the following research plan. According to the schedule, I started classroom observation from September 3, 2008, to November 24, 2008. Class meetings were scheduled for every Monday and Wednesday afternoon from 2:30 to 4:20 PM. There were a total of 18 class meetings, 36 hours of observation because the instructor's scheduled midterm examination for two weeks.

Before classroom observations, I planned to have an appointment with the

instructor regarding the curriculum and activities which the instructor would use in the class. Due to her limited time, I only gained permission to explain my study and distribute consent letters on September 3, 2008, through an email communication on August 5, 2008. I obtained a consent letter from the instructor (Appendix A) and gave her a copy of the Research Subjects' Bill of Rights (Appendix B) from University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) 2001 Manual, on September 3, 2008.

After I obtained IRBPHS approval on August 26, 2008, I explained the purposes and procedures of my study and my role as a researcher in the classroom on September 3, 2008. I distributed consent letters (Appendix C) to male and female students. With the written form of consent letters, ESL learners had a deeper understanding of potential risks and benefits from this study with my further explanation. I tried to be patient and modified my language to fit learners' language proficiency level as questions arose. I described and answered questions in Mandarin when a Chinese male student asked me questions after the class. Translation into other languages was not provided because no potential participants requested further explanation. I collected consent letters once signed. A copy of research subjects' bill of rights (Appendix B) was provided to each participant.

During classroom observations, I collected handouts that the instructor passes around for academic purposes. A voice recorder with an attached microphone was used to record students' verbal interaction in the whole class as well as during their group work. Students' written notes were collected if related to group discussion.

A challenge might emerge regarding how to avoid binary thinking about gender

during observations. Gender cannot be considered by biological sex alone, but includes the other social identities coexisting with physical bodies. For example, what I “saw” went beyond participants’ physical differences, such as biological sex, hair and skin color, to their dress styles. These appearance differences represented how participants positioned themselves as particular genders in terms of their social classes, cultures and ethnicities. What I “heard” was participants’ pronunciation, accuracy, and fluency of using English or their first languages when they used them in class. The verbal utterances represented their identities and how they saw themselves as language learners. My observations were based on micro views of individuals rather than generalization about participants as males and females. The follow-up interviews about how learners positioned themselves in peer interactions provided essential and fruitful sources of information about gender.

Another challenge was to consider the context of language behavior and its relation to gender in peer interactions. An observation guide (Appendix D) was used to direct data collection in the setting. I wrote fieldnotes, a written form of the researcher’s sensory experiences during data collection, to describe the setting, contexts, and activities for classroom observation. To understand the dynamics of peer interactions, I wrote fieldnotes for group work. I added my reflections and comments based on observations.

After classroom observations, I typed all information related to my study in a fieldnote as detailed as possible while my memory was fresh. I saved data as a separate file and stored them in a safe place where only the researcher could have access to them. I also typed observed students’ cultural backgrounds and tracked the history of observed group types. Based on this information, I selected different groups for further observation.

The selection from diverse students and groups provided comprehensive and detailed data for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of gender and peer interaction.

Follow-up interviews were scheduled from November 10 to November 24, 2008. Previous observations informed my interview questions and drew my focus on the research questions. To avoid any interruption or cause any inconvenience in preparation for midterms, interview appointments were scheduled after midterm. I set up one hour individual interview schedules with participants on the basis of their convenience, but the period of interview varied because some participants were descriptive or willing to share more opinions. The interview data were collected by tape-recording and note-taking. The interview locations were in group study rooms at a university-owned library, where it was quiet and without interruptions by others. Before interviews started, I reminded participants about their rights to reject my questions and gave them a sheet for their selection of pseudonym (Appendix E). I used semi-structured interview questions (Appendix F), which were the same general questions for each individual participant. I also mentioned that participants shared insights based on their experiences in this ESL oral class.

Questions were open-ended, including demographic, experience, and feeling questions. Demographic questions helped me understand the participants' backgrounds, such as age, culture, English learning experiences, and proficiency levels. Experience and feeling questions built up an understanding of interactional styles based upon gender and its influence on second language learning.

Alternative methods for further data collection were informal conversational interviews and email communications. Data from informal conversational interviews

were collected only when I had social conversations with participants and our topic was related to the research topic, or when participants shared their opinions during class break or after class in any informal setting. I had informal conversational interviews and email communications with participants when any further information was needed or when an informal setting made participants more relaxed.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis was twofold. After data collection for classroom interaction, I used activity as an analytical unit for transcribing the tapes according to transcription conventions (Appendix G) and summarizing the main features of each peer interaction. I grouped all interactions by participants, so that I was able to understand the variation of interaction within the individual participant. After interviews, I transcribed the tapes and organized the major answers for each interview question by participants. Then, I grouped participants' main opinions by interview questions. The major themes emerged as I noticed the similarities and differences among their points of view.

Naturalistic inquiry does not require a clear-cut plan for data collection and analysis (Patton, 2002). Insights for data analysis may occur during the process of data collection. Patton suggested two sources for organizing data: research questions and insights emerging from data collection. My study focused on the process of peer interaction. I tracked and recorded emerging insights from my observations and used processes as an analytical framework to interpret data.

Goodwin (1990) pointed out that the study of interactive phenomena used activity as an analytical unit, such as language development from Vygotsky's perspectives. Goodwin also suggested that the unit of cultural analysis, including gender, is not the

group or the individual, but contextualized activities. Social structures may change in different activities in which the members of a society position themselves. Similarly, Pavlenko (2008) suggested that the basic unit for analysis is activity in the *diversity* framework of gender studies. Levinson (1992) defined activity as:

> A fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded, events with *constraints* on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions. Paradigm examples would be teaching, a job interview, a jural interrogation, a football game, a task in a workshop, a dinner party, and so on. (p. 69)

Furthermore, Freeman and McElhinny (1996) pointed out that using activity as an analytical unit may answer questions from when, whether, and how the similarities and differences occur among men and women's speech, rather than simply answer questions on what differences lie between men and women, falling into binary thinking (Bing & Bergvall, 1998). This analytical unit helped researchers understand beyond how gender shapes language, to how and when language constructs gender as a structure of the society. With activity as an analytical unit, researchers might explain how a specific linguistic form or feature operated in a variety of contexts of activity, where gendered and linguistic practices might take place (Pavlenko, 2008). This study chose task-based practice as a unit of analysis to explore how gender influenced the process of peer interaction in different types of activities and how interactional styles shaped by gender influenced second language learning when scaffold help was offered.

A challenge for researchers in language and gender is how to avoid a polarized dichotomy of gender (Talbot, 1998), but instead to focus on a dynamic concept of gender during the process of data analysis. Interview data provided crucial information about how learners position themselves and their social relations in peer interactions. According

to interview data, I focused on certain social categories which were salient in interactions. For example, an ESL male student in his early thirties mentioned that he tended to act as a leader in discussion because of his age (Informal communication, April, 2008). He considered himself as an older brother when he worked with other students in their twenties. In this case, age as a social category which was imbedded in gender, might influence peer interactions in the ESL classroom.

According to Bucholtz and Hall (1995), to consider context in the analysis of interactions offers perceptions of gender in language use. Bucholtz (1999) suggested that detailed contexts need to be concerned about local meaning rather than global divisions of gender and involve individual variation across social categories. Goodwin (1990) claimed that the same individuals covary their talk and gender from one activity to another. Language behavior cannot be isolated from contexts (Wodak & Benke, 1997). Within an activity as an analytical unit, I focused on the variation of language and gender in relation to context.

Human Subjects Protection

Before the study, the coordinator wrote a permission letter allowing me to conduct my research in the ESL program to the members of the committee of Institution Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) on July 30, 2008. With the coordinator's permission, I applied for the approval of my research for human subjects from IRBPHS on August 11, 2008. According to the ESL catalogue, students must be 18 years old or older, or have completed their secondary education. A parental consent letter is not required. Within the application, I provided a brief description of my study with consent letters for the instructor and students, research subjects' bill of rights, and

permission letters. After I gained approval from IRBPHS (Appendix H) on August 26, 2008, I collected data in the fall semester of 2008.

During the study, the consent letters and a copy of the research subjects' bill of rights were provided to all voluntary participants. I considered students' second language proficiency when I explained research purposes and procedures, and participants' potential risks and benefits. I would provide translation into another language if English could not provide clear understanding. I clarified participants' rights and released their emotional anxiety that they could withdraw from the study at any time. To consider participants' identities and protect their rights, individual interviews were conducted in a private one-to-one setting.

After data collection, I used pseudonyms of participants in all fieldnotes and dissertation for protecting their identities. The data were kept in a safe place for my access only to the study. The data were used for my doctoral dissertation, possible presentation in a professional conference or publication in the future.

Background of the Researcher

Two major backgrounds and experiences of the researcher may have influenced my interpretation of this study. One is my experiences of gender identities and practices and the other is my ESL experiences. The primary gender practices were rooted in family and expanded to school. My ESL experiences included English learning, teaching, and ESL classroom observations. These will help me to understand the dynamics of gendered interaction in the ESL setting.

My family is the primary source and has a great influence on my gender identities and gender practices. My father is a doctor who served in the Air Force. As a child, I was

more engaged in readings about health education than fairy tales. The technical terms for reproductive organs were treated as names, even though I grew up in the society in which parents do not directly talk about sex with their children. An experience influenced my view of gender at very young age. I remember I asked for a toy from my father. I expected to get a doll as I considered myself as a girl. Surprisingly, my father bought me a gun. This story impressed me because my father did not have stereotypes of the selection of a girl's toys.

My mother is a traditional wife and mother. She educated me as a girl who should help for housework, even though I was younger than my brother. However, I resisted the stereotyped role. My mother bought me skirts, but I preferred jeans. When I was a junior high school student, most of my clothes and shoes were red.

The interaction with my brother provided very important opportunities for gender practices at young age. The ideal family of two children was based on the birth-control policy in Taiwan at that time. I grew up in a family of two children and this gave me opportunities to claim equal rights with my brother.

I presented my gender identities from family to school. In the second year of high school in Taiwan, which is equivalent to11th grade in the U.S. educational system, students were divided into two study areas: human subjects and science studies. Teachers assumed that females would perform better in human subjects and males perform better in science studies. I studied in a girl's high school, but to compete with male students, I chose science studies. A male math teacher suggested that I not to study science because of my gender. I insisted to finish my study regardless of his stereotype.

With my bachelor's degree in Nursing, I taught health education in junior high

schools. The textbook I used focused more on physical differences rather than psychological and social roles of gender. I was not aware of how gender influences classroom interaction and the importance of gender roles in human development.

As I read the Chinese version of Gray's (2004) book, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, translated as 男女大不同 (Men and Women are totally different), I treated this book as a bible for cross-gender communication. I immediately accepted his view of gender and believed that men and women are totally different. This book drew me to focus on gender differences. As I read Cameron (2005) and Pavlenko's (2008) study, I reconsidered the meaning of gender in real practices. I changed my binary view of gender to a dynamic one.

Men and women coexist in the world. My philosophy is to see gender in the world not as competition or stereotype, but as collaboration. To promote male and female's learning one cannot just focus on one side. Educators need to consider how to create opportunities for male and female students to present their knowledge and provide scaffolded help to enhance learning. It will be challenging for me to take a neutral role as a researcher. As Willett (1996) claimed "research as gendered practice," I am hoping this study is not just an opportunity for my gender practice, but also contributes to the philosophy of viewing gender as collaborative learning.

My ESL experiences guide me to understand gendered interaction in the ESL classroom. I enrolled in an ESL program for one month when I first came to the U.S. for graduate studies in 2000. I noticed that learning activities in ESL program in the U.S. were different from those in higher education in Taiwan. I participated in more oral discussion rather than sitting and listening in class. As an international student who came

to a Western country for a graduate degree, it was a challenge for me to adjust to the new learning activities, especially expressing my ideas in a second language. When I worked with students who were also from Taiwan, I felt awkward speaking English in discussion. However, I did not notice whether gender was a factor in peer interaction and second language learning.

Later, I was an instructor and taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at college and university level from year of 2003 to 2005 in Taiwan. I used group discussions in class. I did recognize that male students who were against the class policy for turning in papers and arriving to class on time, and who spoke up in the class, attracted my attention. I also noticed that male students had more social conversations with me after class. I remember one day the discussion topic was about cars. Male students talked more than usual, and a female student was aware of the differences as she mentioned this to me after class. However, I previously had never thought of gender as a possible variable in peer interaction in assigned tasks. I tended to observe students as a whole group rather than as individuals working in groups. I was not aware of the influence of peer interaction on students' second language acquisition.

In 2008, I was an observer in an ESL class for Master's students. After class, I had an informal conversation with the instructor (informal communication, April 14, 2008) about the interaction between males and females. She mentioned that a Korean female student was shy and had less confidence speaking in class. However, I noticed that the instructor assigned the female student to a male dominant group, one with two males and the other one with three. The instructor was aware of the individual and linguistic variables, but not aware of sociocultural variables regarding the student's language

acquisition. I began wondering whether gender composition of a group was a factor in students' interaction and second language learning, and whether the situation to which the instructor assigned the female student limited her opportunity for speaking and learning.

In that class, I observed a group of four, two males and two females, when they checked their answers for a fill-in-blank assignment. A Korean male student, who sat in the center, acted as a leader and controlled the speed of discussion by checking the answers one by one. The disagreement occurred when one of his answers was "Everything were shaking." First, a Chinese female student corrected his answer as "Everything was shaking." He did not accept it right away. Then, a Korean female student repeated the corrected answer. He doubted with a rising tone, but did not accept the answer provided by two female students. He then talked to me "You know the answer, right?"

Later, when the instructor checked the answers with the whole class, the Korean male student repeated "Everything was shaking" three times. This experience raised questions about Vygotsky's ZPD. Why did the Korean male student reject the answer from two more capable female students, but accept the answer from an instructor perceived as a figure with more authority? Did gender influence the less competent Korean male student to accept assistance from two more capable female students in peer discussion, even when scaffolded help was provided? I would understand the answer in more detail if I could have heard opinions from the Korean male student's perspective.

I had an informal conversation with an ESL male student (informal communication, April 17, 2008) after an observation. I asked his opinion regarding whether gender influenced peer interaction. He thought personality was a factor. However,

when I further asked him about his experience with two other males and one female, he mentioned that that female student talked less than the male students. In his opinion, personality, not gender, was a factor.

I also met an ESL Chinese female Master's student at church and had an informal conversation about her English learning experience (informal communication, March, 2008). She mentioned that she tended to keep silent when the goal of the assigned task has been achieved in a paired work with a Korean female student. She noticed that her partner did not properly use the auxiliary for the third person, for example, "she don't." At first, the Chinese female student provided negative feedback for her Korean partner. Later, she found that she repeated the same error as her partner did. She decided to keep silent after the assigned group work was done, so she would not be influenced by her partner's grammatical errors. Did her silence limit the chances for social interaction where second language acquisition may occur, or did her silence prevent her from the repeated error? The Chinese female's learning experience increased my interest to explore how interactional styles influence social interaction in second language learning.

In my experiences as an ESL learner and an EFL instructor, gender has been an "invisible" variable in peer interaction and second language learning. However, in a neutral position of a class observer, I noticed that gender-related interaction occurred in peer interaction (such as the male student rejected help from two female students) and that unconsciously the instructor assigned the shy female students to a male dominant group. I also noticed that assisted help was provided in peer interaction, but the Korean male student, who dominated discussion, rejected help from females. The other case was a more capable female student who provided help for a less competent partner, but her

fears of repeating her partner's grammatical mistakes made her withdraw from the conversation.

I hope that my prior experience as an EFL instructor and ESL student helped me to understand students' learning transition from an EFL to ESL setting and their interactions with diverse learners. In addition, my prior observation experience might have increased my sensitivity to be aware of how interactional styles by gender influence the ZPD for second language learning. I also hoped that this study might have implications regarding gender in ESL pedagogy.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2003) suggested that ethical issues should be considered through the process of writing a dissertation. I described the purpose of the study to all potential participants in the ESL class. An informed consent form was provided to ensure that participants were willing to engage in the study. The form included the participant's rights, the purpose, procedures, and the benefit of this study, protection of the participant's privacy, and signatures of both participant and the researcher. The participant kept one copy of the consent form and I kept another one.

I gained permission from the coordinator of the ESL program, as a gatekeeper, who had authority to give permission to conduct this study in the ESL classroom. I respected the ESL instructor and students without disturbing their teaching and learning. I was aware of any possible power abuse during interviewing participants. During the interpretation of data, I was aware of any possible researcher's bias on account of data from participants. In the dissertation writing, I avoided any word choices against gender, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Familiarity by Hsiu-Lien Chu (2009)
I did not know what familiarity was
Until my participants led me to here
I gradually became familiar with
Familiarity

Introduction

The goal of this study was to examine gender dynamics in peer interaction and their impact on second language learning. This chapter presents the backgrounds of participants and findings to three research questions. Each profile provides a detailed description of the participant's demographics, perception of gender, and social relations with partners. The findings present gender in three areas: features of dynamic traits in peer interaction, interactional styles, and the influence of gender on second language learning. Gender was manifested in a repertoire of gender dynamics, centering on familiarity. Gender was also imbedded in interactional styles and presented its variation on different linguistic levels. In addition, gender as a structure of social relations promoted and limited second language learning in linguistic, psychological, and social levels.

Profiles of the Participants

The 10 participants were from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They shared similar characteristics: they were young adults, international students privileged enough to travel abroad, non-English speakers, coming from middle to upper class families, first learning English in their home countries, sharing a similar English learning process, and having stayed previously in the U.S. for a few months. The age range of the

10 participants was from 18 to 30, with an average of 23.7 years old. The participants' family's social-economic status ranged from middle to upper class. Most participants started learning English in their home countries from elementary school to the first year of middle school, except two females started learning English at the very young age of three or four years old. Six out of ten participants had been to English-speaking countries for English summer camps or travel. The length of the 10 participants' stay in the U.S. before the interview was conducted varied from three months to twenty months, with an average of six months.

The following presents a detailed description of the individual participants in alphabetical order. The profile of each participant includes three parts: demographics, perception of gender, and social relations with peers. First, the demographics describes age, sex, cultural background, status in ESL program, experiences of learning English, and length of stay in the U.S. The demographics are summarized on Table 1 (p. 83).

Secondly, the profile also encompasses participants' perceptions of gender; for example, how their cultures shaped them and how they defined gender. The society and family shaped them to be a particular gender through cultural values and education. Their perceptions of gender reflected their understanding of the reality and ideology formed by the larger society. The participants tended to limit gender as males and females, but individual perceptions of gender varied.

Third, the profile provides details on participants' social relations with peers; for instance, whether gender played a role in interaction, how participants related to partners and presented themselves in peer interactions. Each individual participant had his or her own interpretation of whether gender played a role in discussion. The participants tended

to relate to group members as classmates or friends. In their social relations, they positioned themselves in various ways.

Ahmed

Background

Ahmed was a 23-year-old male student. He enrolled in this ESL program from Summer to Fall 2008. Because his family owned an apartment in the U.S., he came to the U.S. back and forth for summers or holidays, but this time period was the longest length of stay since he came here in May 2008. Ahmed grew up in Saudi Arabia with a Turkish, Indian, and Egyptian background from his grandparents. Due to his traveling to Europe, he was influenced by French and Spanish culture.

Ahmed started learning English around six or seven years old and joined an English summer camp in England at the age of 14. This experience had a great influence on him. He reported that “from that moment, I completely change my life.” He considered English was not an “extra language,” but included “learning a new culture.” He felt that “learning that extra language make[s] me feel comfortable to talk with a lot of peoples [people].” He also traveled to Canada for two months. Ahmed received his Bachelor’s degree in Information Systems by English instruction in Egypt. He pointed out that he felt “more comfortable to speak in English, more than Arabic” during his stay in Egypt. According to his ESL instructor, Ahmed performed good English oral skills but retained in the ESL class because he had not gained higher TOEFL scores.

Perceptions of Gender

Ahmed was the oldest son in his family. Because of his cultural backgrounds from grandparents and experiences of traveling to Europe, he considered himself as a

"worldwide person," but specifically identified himself as a "Middle Easterner" in this class. All the diverse cultures he encountered shaped him to become a polite, generous, considerate, and flexible person who was able to accept different perspectives "no matter what their status, no matter what their gender, what their color, how long their hair." He loved beauty and fashion. He felt he was not deeply influenced by Saudi Arabian culture.

Ahmed considered that gender simply means man and woman. He explained that "I don't see any other explanation for gender beside male and female." His definition reflected that gender was based on sex. He thought gender did not play a role in pairs or groups. He related to group members as classmates because he tried to separate academic and private life.

Social Relations in Peers

Ahmed pointed out that he did not know why he felt comfortable to work with some students and uncomfortable to communicate with others. For example, he had limited communication when working with Asians, such as Lucy. He guessed that they might lack vocabulary or courage to speak in English. Moreover, if he worked with people from Saudi Arabia, he and his partner tended to speak the home language instead of English. However, he felt more comfortable talking to Alexandra, Andressa, and Xoan. He guessed that they knew more vocabulary and their native languages were related to English.

When Ahmed worked in groups, he stated that "people have [a] tendency [to] give me an impression of a leader," "push me" and "making [make] me a leader." He guessed probably because he talked too much or contributed different perspectives to group discussions. He felt uncomfortable with this situation because he considered himself as "a

shy person." Ahmed further claimed that he liked to be a leader with some control, but not in all situations, for example, speaking in public. So when his group members urged him to be a representative of their group, he felt that "I am not that comfortable, I like to do, but it doesn't mean I like to do it. I'm willing to do it."

Alexandra

Background

Alexandra was a 22-year-old female student. She was originally from Spain and came here as an exchange student. She took only one ESL class and other classes related to her major. She started learning English at around three or four years old. However, she thought that she lacked opportunities for practice when learning English in her own country. She further explained that three or four hours of lessons in a week "is nothing." She had been to Ireland twice for two summer camps at age of 12 and 13 and traveled to New York. This was her first time living in the States. She had been to the U.S. for three months. She reasoned that staying in an English-speaking country is important because she can "immerge" herself and "speak English all the time."

Perceptions of Gender

Alexandra's Spanish culture expected her to "to act like a girl, dress like a girl, hang out with girl friends, to have …boyfriend." Comparing with males, she claimed that "we are kind of equal, we are the same." She further explained that females were "supposed to be like more correct…manner are expected to be better." Alexandra defined gender as males and females and "being a guy or a girl." Her definition included physical characteristics and social roles.

Social Relations in Peers

Alexandra thought that “gender…doesn’t play any role” in her discussions. However, she noticed that she felt “less comfortable with women as with men.” She believed that she used “the same talking to guys or girls.” She analyzed her social relations with her group members as students, but she also recognized that social relations varied “depend[ing] on person.” For example, she considered Xoan as a friend rather than a student. She further defined that friends have something in common and hang out together. She explained that Xoan was her friend not because they were from the same country, but because they took four classes together and had conversation after classes, such as talking on the phone. Alexandra considered herself as a student while working in pairs and groups. She also identified herself as a talkative, sociable person who tried to speak and share opinions.

Andressa

Background

Andressa was a 30-year-old Brazilian woman with European background. She was greatly influenced by European culture, such as appearance and style. She came to the U.S. as an ESL student, and started learning English at 11 years old. She considered that it was “not enough” to learn English two hours a week. At her age of 19, she studied at an English school and wished she could come to an English-speaking country. She recalled that she acquired and became “familiar with grammar and vocabulary” and she did not “speak English at all in Brazil.” So far, Andressa had stayed in the U.S. for 20 months. She felt that “I just start to speak when I came to this country.”

Perceptions of Gender

Andressa was from a big city where women were respected. Her family expected her to be a “professional” and an “international” person, but they would not consider that she not go beyond her brothers’ success. Even though most Latin Americans accept that men take higher positions than women, she thought this was not true in all areas. She considered herself as a Latino and white Caucasian with European background, even though she did not speak Spanish.

Andressa was “very proud to be a woman,” but “not a feminist.” She had “never thought to be a man.” She pointed out that “nowadays, it’s hard to define gender.” She described that gender was related to “sex reality,” “biological system,” and femininity and masculinity, such as “tender[ness]” and “aggressive[ness].” She thought that “everyone try to choose which gender they want by themselves.” She believed that “man and woman can compete in the same level…no difference between them.” Andressa had a strong identity of being a woman. She perceived that gender was not only based on physical characteristics, but also masculinity and femininity. There was no competence difference between men and women.

Social Relations in Peers

Andressa believed that gender was “naturally” presented through discussion. She had no problem working with males and females. She tended to take charge and coordinate discussion when working with women. Yet she preferred to work with men because she felt it “comfortable” and “challenging.” She explained that “it’s not always easily to take [in] charge when work[ing] with man.” Men could limit her for participation; therefore, she could “observe” them to see how men behave and speak.

This opportunity gave her “a new view.” Furthermore, she noticed that the flow of discussion became “fast and easily” because men focused on the task and were “straight [to] the point.” She thought that tasks could finished faster when working with males than females.

Andressa treated classmates as “colleagues” and considered her social relations with them were “equal.” She mentioned that even though she was the oldest student in the class, she had never positioned herself in a higher level. She tried not to disclose her personal life in the class, and only a few classmates knew her age. Moreover, she commented that they were here to learn, so she treated them “in the same level.”

Andressa “unconsciously” and spontaneously presented herself in groups. She recognized that she tended to take charge of group work and speak more than other group members, for example, she gave orders and suggestions. Nonetheless, she tried “to avoid this kind of behavior” because she “conscious[ly]” realized that everyone is “equal in class.” She usually worked with younger partners because she was the oldest student in the ESL class. She tried to respect their age and experiences. Andressa positioned herself as a classmate and a friend with peers.

Aqua

Background

Aqua was a 22-year-old ESL male student from Canton Province, China. He was the only child in a middle class family. He started learning English in fifth grade in an elementary school. He mentioned that his English learning experience in China was not good because learning tended to focus more on receptive rather than productive skills. So he preferred to study in the U.S. Before coming to the States, he had never been to any

English-speaking countries. He had stayed in the U.S. for three months since August, 2008.

Perceptions of Gender

Aqua grew up in Chinese culture. His family expected him to be an outstanding person and to have a happy life. Chinese culture influenced him to be a "modest, warm-hearted, and honor[able]" man. However, he did not think Chinese culture had any influence on male behavior.

Aqua perceived gender as "woman and man" because "two gender[s] in the world. He even asked me "do we have another gender in the world?" He considered gender "is some different part[s] of our body." Clearly, his definition of gender focused on different sexual characteristics. He further assumed that my study was related to differences between genders. He claimed that "there is no difference between man and woman." He seldom thought about gender in his interactions with classmates.

Social Relations in Peers

Aqua reported that he "seldom think of" partners' sex or ethnicity when he worked in pairs and groups. He did not mind where his partners came from. Aqua considered his social relations with group members as "classmates" and "friends." He felt relaxed talking to classmates since they had known each other for three months. He did not mind what he said because they were classmates and he just expressed his opinions. He claimed that he seldom considered his social relations before jumping into discussions. However, he noticed that he did not talk much with Ahmed after they finished tasks. He assumed that if he worked with Duan and Lucy, they would continue conversations after task, for instance, "what's the homework tonight?" and "what are you going to do

tomorrow?”

Interestingly, Aqua was aware of his role in groups varied by topic and partners. He positioned himself as a leader and male role in groups. For example, he asked his partner’s opinions first and listened to them. Then he gave his opinions. He assumed that if his partners like to talk more, he would give opportunities to them.

Duan

Background

Duan was a 28-year-old man from Thailand with a Chinese background. He came here as an ESL student. He started learning English at 10 years old, but didn’t speak much English in his country. He spent three to six hours a week studying English at high school but only four hours at university. His work, as an architect, required English skills, but he felt he learned less than at school. Since he noticed that English played an important role in his life, he decided to study in the U.S. He studied at summer camps in England at age of 12 and in Singapore at age of 15. These experiences encouraged him to speak and communicate with confidence. He also traveled to England for two weeks. He had stayed in the U.S. for three months.

Perceptions of Gender

Duan’s family was greatly influenced by Chinese values, which were in favor of men. Because he was the first-born boy in his family, he always gained what he asked from grandparents. Consequently, Duan had to fulfill higher expectation and responsibilities from his family, for example, achieving higher education, getting a good job, protecting his family, and earning more money than women.

Duan described gender as “sex sign.” He explained that “in this world you have to live with two genders.” Even though gays and lesbians exist, he did “not consider [them] as gender.” He emphasized that two sexes are only “different in appearance.” Duan pointed out that woman and men are “equal” because “women are …capable of all things as men.” He mentioned that he did not consider any differences or consciously notice any gap between men and women.

Social Relations in Peers

Duan at first thought that gender did not play a role in pairs or groups. Later, he modified that gender may have influence on discussion depending on persons. For example, he noticed that Jessica did not talk much when she paired with Xoan. Duan explained that Jessica was shy. Duan mentioned that if a woman is not shy when talking with a man, gender “disappear” at that moment. He felt that “sex is not the boundary” in his experience. He described that “I didn’t notice what I am saying with a girl or guys, I never realize I’m talking with girls. I just talking with my friends.”

Duan categorized his group members as “classmates” and “friends.” He considered that classmates keep distant social distance rather than friends who share “a lot of things in common” and “do something together.” For example, he felt comfortable and spoke fluently with Aqua, Lucy, and Son because he was familiar with them. He felt the way they talked was very similar. Duan guessed probably because they were Asians. He maintained that while sex exists, sex is not a category for him to relate to other members. Duan presented himself as a friend in groups because they are equal and have to share thoughts. He tried to initiate conversations as an ice-breaker and made group members become more familiar. He also gave opportunities to “make them speak.”

Jessica

Background

Jessica was a 25-year-old Korean woman. She studied in China for several years and was influenced by Chinese culture. She only studied ESL classes. She started learning English at 11 or 12 years old. At the beginning she only knew some words. She considered that learning English from school was not enough for her since she graduated from high school. She thought she really studied English after she entered university. Before she studied in the U.S., she traveled to San Diego, Los Angeles for three or four months. This trip helped her to learn “some tone, their speaking accent, and their style.” She believed that taking ESL classes in the U.S. was “quite different” for her.

Perceptions of Gender

Jessica declared that “I am a female.” She analyzed that Korean society “push women to be women.” She found that these feminine issues were presented in Korean sayings and quotes which characterized women as a “helpful,…shy, and calm [person] all the time.” She emphasized that women have to be well-behaved. Her culture imposed strict rules on women’s behaviors, for example, not talking too loud and sitting like a lady. She thought she was not much influenced by her culture, but she inferred that she acted like a woman not only in class but also in her “whole life.”

Jessica asserted that men and women still have their roles, even though traditionally men had to work and women had to be housewives. For example, she believed that “man is someone who protects woman.” She explained that this belief was probably influenced by her immersion of “woman’s novels, media, and drama.” Besides male and female roles, Jessica noticed that men and women act by “certain rules”

regarding to their relationships. She described that men have to pay when two persons go out for a date, but not to pay when two are just casual friends. Jessica noticed that males and females had their social roles and followed social norms.

Social Relations in Peers

Jessica was aware of differences when she worked with males and females. She described that men tended to be leaders and to guide the whole discussion. Nonetheless, she felt comfortable with Duan when he led discussion. She expressed that she did "not have to force to lead …conversation." What she had to do was "um, okay, and answer." She further pointed out that she felt comfortable only when a man led properly. If the man led too fast, she would feel uncomfortable and unpleasant. Jessica also felt comfortable to work with females. She expressed that

> When I work with girls…nobody become a leader, we collaborate each other, the mood, the feeling is very calm, warm. We can say things freely…something more private I can say to girls. With guys, sharing feelings, not too intimate. (Nov. 11, 2008)

Jessica related to her different group members as "friends" and "classmates." She considered her friends as Koreans and those with whom she had prior social activity together, such as Son and Duan. They had known each other for few months and took three ESL classes together. Jessica felt that talking to them was like talking to friends. However, classmates were those with whom she was not familiar because she felt distance from them.

In groups, Jessica stated that "I am there as a person." She did not think too much about presenting herself in particular social relations such as a female or a Korean. She wanted to be a fun person. Nevertheless, she noticed that she was a little bit older than other classmates, especially five years older than other Korean women. Due to Korean

culture, she had to lead when she worked with Korean women even in an outside classroom setting. It seemed that age became a salient factor to influence interaction in the specific cultural group.

Lucy

Background

Lucy was a 20-year-old Korean female ESL student. She had studied English since the age of 11. She recalled her English learning experience at high school only focused on memorizing vocabulary and grammar in South Korea. She did not think that experience was useful because "it's difficult to make a sentence correctly or fluently like native speakers." She thought she didn't know "how to use" her knowledge of English. She had never been to any English-speaking countries. Before she studied in the ESL program, she attended a private English school for international students in downtown San Francisco. She had studied in the U.S. for six months. Lucy noticed that her learning experience in the U.S. was "better than before." The following was an example she reported during interview:

> I am here speak to native speakers and international students. Sometimes I use incorrect vocabulary when talk to international students, they understand. When talk to native students, they correct me have good solution, better than before, better than my sentence. (Nov. 15, 2008)

Perceptions of Gender

Lucy sensed pressure from Korean society, which had specific rules for women. She claimed that "in Korea, I didn't want to be a woman." She felt uncomfortable to be a woman because women tend to be criminals' targets. Her mother always warned her to keep safe. She expressed that "if I were a man, I won't worry about that." She mentioned that "we have a lot [of] rules because we are woman [women]" when she was in middle

school. Girls were required to put on skirts and white socks. When applying for a job, interviewers tend to focus on the appearance of applicants. She affirmed again that “I don’t want to be a woman; I want to be a person.”

Lucy defined gender based on biological differences. She reflected different status related to men and women on campus and at work. She argued that men and women are the same status as students on campus. However, at work, women gained less payment than men and were hardly promoted. Prejudice was wildly spread in working places that men are better than women because women may quit when they give birth or marry. Lucy realized that Korean society treated men and women differently.

Social Relations in Peers

Lucy thought that she knew many male students in class, so partners’ sex was not a problem for her. When she worked with Duan, she felt “very happy and excited” because Duan was friendly and funny. They had social conversations after they finished tasks. However, if she worked with a man with whom she was unfamiliar (for example, Xoan), he would influence her interaction. She assumed that she would focus on English and topic only. She felt matched depending on partners. For example, when she worked with Andressa, they “talked a lot” even it’s not about their tasks. They had longer conversation. She concluded that “it’s important who’s my partner, how I know about my partner.”

Lucy related to group members by her familiarity with them. For example, she considered Andressa as her “older sister” or “mother.” She felt that Andressa volunteered “tak[ing] care of” her when she did not know about assignments or was sick. She treated Duan and Aqua as her “older brothers.” Saki was her “close friend” even though they

only took one class together. Lucy and Saki talked a lot in class and after class because Lucy was interested in Japan and Saki's mother was from Korea. However, Ahmed was her "classmate." When they paired, their conversation followed a question-and-answer style. They lacked connection to have a longer conversation and did not talk after class.

Lucy positioned herself as a friend with the same level as other students. Specifically, she presented herself as a young and smart student. As a young student, she could make an excuse that she did not understand the meaning of vocabulary because of her younger age and staying in the U.S. for a short time. On the other hand, she presented her intelligence by expressing opinions and using more vocabulary than her partners. She stated that "I am very smart. I have to be very smart." When she gained ideas, she spoke very proudly, but she blamed herself if she lost opportunities to talk in class. She explained that "even [though] I can't speak very well, I have to lead situation. That's why I feel stressful [stressed]…I don't want only listen. I want to talk. If I don't talk a lot, it mean[s] I can't talk English what I want." Lucy was eager to present her ideas in group, but she also felt frustrated if she did not.

Mie

Background

Mie was the youngest student in this ESL class at the age of 18 years old. She was a matriculated student who took two ESL classes and some courses related to her media studies at the same university. She came from a mixture of Japanese and Korean culture. She grew up in Japan and studied in Korea for a year in her middle school. She started learning English at three years old because her parents were interested in English education. She recalled her early learning experience in the following extract:

> Since I was a child, I was very interested in English. English is like my second language. I learn vocabulary, pronunciation very naturally. I didn't feel exhausted when I study English grammar. (Nov. 13, 2008)

Mie went to an after-school program for English speaking training, grammar and vocabulary, even during the year of staying in Korea. She went to two summer camps: one in Hawaii in her middle school, and the other in New Zealand in her high school. Before she enrolled in this university, she had stayed in Seattle for three months. So far, she had been in the U.S. for a total of six months.

Perceptions of Gender

The larger society of Japanese culture expected Mie to fulfill feminine characteristics, such as "to be a good mother, good wife, the person who can cook well, clean up well, who can educate children well." Mie's parents expected her "to be an adult who can have common sense, high knowledge, international person." Obviously, her parents did not educate Mie under traditional feminine roles, but expected her to be a global citizen with knowledge.

Mie had "never thought about gender" because she grew up in girls' middle and high schools. She lacked opportunities to know about men. She defined that gender "was given when people were born" and was basically males and females. Gender also included "mental and physical difference[s]." She considered a female with "male mentality" was a man. She concluded it is "not so simple to separate [gender as] female and male." Mie noticed that gender went beyond physical differences.

Social Relations in Peers

Mie disagreed that gender played a role in discussion because males and females have the right to say something in this class. She noticed that females talk more than

males. For example, Son and Ahmed did not talk much in class. She further explained that females organize their ideas through talking with partners; however, males organized their thoughts in their mind first. Consequently, men did not talk much.

Mie pointed out that she felt very comfortable to work with Lucy and other Korean women, but felt uncomfortable if working with men. She felt that she was not familiar with males because she studied in a girls' high school. This experience had great influence on her. She expressed that "it's horrible…I feel so uncomfortable when guys talk to me, when I speak [to] guys." Surprisingly, Mie mentioned she felt relaxed when working with Son because he was Korean.

Mie perceived other students as "close friend [s]" and "classmate [s]." She mentioned that most students were not close to her because as a matriculated student, she was not a part of the ESL student group. Only a Korean woman was her close friend because they took another ESL class together; the others were classmates. She recognized that she was the youngest in the class. She thought that they were her "brothers and sisters in terms of age," but they had the same goal of learning English. Mie was not familiar with her classmates because they took one class together, lived off campus, and were older than her. However, she felt very comfortable to talk with Koreans, even with Son. She accepted that "Korea is like my second country."

Mie presented herself in group as a female, follower, and good listener. She usually followed group leaders. She described that leaders were men or strong ladies, such as Alexandra and Andressa. She did not speak a lot or lead discussions, but she tried to "understand them by listening…carefully, sometimes suggestions or support their ideas" because she thought that "females usually support…males. Females have to notice

kind of everything." She listened to partners' ideas and "modif[ied] their ideas." She connected her talk related to Japanese culture. She explained that Japanese do not talk much even though they speak English well.

Son

Background

Son was a 26-year-old man from Busan, South Korea. He came to the U.S. to study in ESL classes. With this experience, he hoped he would get a job when he went back to Korea. He started learning English at 14 years old. He mentioned that they were educated to achieve higher scores for university entrance examination. He further commented that "at that time, I didn't know speaking is important. I focus on writing and grammar to get good score." He did not have a chance to speak with native speakers in Korea. This was his first time to study English in an English-speaking country. He studied in a language school for six months before he enrolled in the ESL program. He had studied in the U.S. for nine months.

Perceptions of Gender

Son's parents and teachers educated him to be an "honest" and "a good man." He specifically mentioned that his experience in military service shaped him to be a good man. This was an obligation for men to serve in military in South Korea. He had to work with all men in that "mini society." He realized the importance of patience and confidence, especially how to get along with others. He thought this opportunity prepared him to adjust the real society. Son perceived gender as men and women, a "natural thing" which is biologically determined.

Social Relations in Peers

Son believed that gender did not play any role in discussions. He explained that men and women are the same. However, he analyzed that it is more difficult to talk with Europeans than Asians. He described that Europeans have better English than Asians because “the structure of European language is similar to English” and they spoke very fast. Moreover, he felt comfortable to work with Duan and Mie and felt uncomfortable to work with Europeans. He explained that “European[s] make me feel like I talk to the native speakers. I think appearance is very similar to native speakers, Americans.”

Son related to different group members as matriculated and ESL students due to the time he spent with them. He felt that he did not have opportunities to meet or talk with matriculated students. He had more opportunities to meet ESL students because he took the same classes with them every day and played soccer with male ESL students on Saturdays outside class. He felt much more familiar with these males, such as Duan and Aqua.

Son noticed that his age was older than other classmates, especially comparing with other Koreans in class. Even though he was a few years older, he had to show consideration and politeness. He pointed out that he used to be very conservative and passive, but he had to follow American rules. He felt that it was hard to adjust to American culture because he was a Korean and an Asian. He noticed that he had been changed to be an active man because he had to speak in class. Gradually, he naturally changed to be active.

Xoan

Background

Xoan was a 23-year-old male student from Spain. He came here as an exchange student since August 2008. He took one ESL class as well as courses related to his major at the same university. He began learning English when he was eight years old. He had been to Ireland four times for summer camps from age of nine to sixteen and traveled to England for 10 days. The only class that he had focused on oral practice was in this ESL program. However, the other classes that he had ever had were combined with grammar and oral conversation but tended to focus on grammar. He assumed that Spaniards have "a bad accent" in English because except for listening to music they lack opportunities to be immersed in all English environments.

Perceptions of Gender

Xoan assumed that "I would [be] like the same if I were a woman." He considered that men and women have "the same roles…duties, obligations and rights." There were no differences in treatment of men and women. His family raised him to be a polite and educated person. For example, he has to wait elders to sit first for a lunch. He asserted that he did not have "any specific behavior because being a man." Xoan declared that "gender is …just men and women. It doesn't mean anything more." He thought that the best way was to treat men and women "the same" and to "achieve the equality."

Social Relations in Peers

Xoan believed that gender did not influence him on interaction, but might influence others. He guessed that some people would feel uncomfortable to work with opposite-sex partners. Xoan related to different partners as classmates with the same

English level and status. However, he did not notice age differences because he did not know other classmates very well. He worked on tasks and lacked information for partners' background. Furthermore, he pointed out that he felt comfortable when talking with a person (such as Ahmed and Alexandra) with connections, for example, sharing similar cultural background or something in common. They did not just focus on tasks, but had some free time for social conversation.

Xoan did not consciously present himself in any particular way. He considered himself as an international student. As Xoan noticed he talked with Westerners and Asians differently, he recognized that "maybe I present myself in a different way." He felt that it was easier to talk with Alexandra and a German female student. He reasoned that they were raised and shared similar cultures and values. He also compared Andressa with that German woman. He felt that he had more in common with the German woman than Andressa. He explained that the German woman was from Europe, but Andressa was from Latin America, even also from a Western culture. With Asians, he felt that he took awhile to know them. He compared the differences when working with different ethnicities and concluded that "it's not conscious, just the way the process goes."

Summary

The following table presents demographic data of each participant from interviews:

Table 1

Demographic Data of the Participants

Name	Age	Sex	Country	SES	Starting age of English	English countries	US
Ahmed	23	M	Saudi Arabia	M	6/7	Y	May 08
Alexandra	22	F	Spain	M-U	3/4	N	Aug 08
Andressa	30	F	Brazil	U	11	N	Mar 07
Aqua	22	M	China	M	10	N	Aug 08
Duan	28	M	Thailand	M	10	Y	Aug 08
Jessica	25	F	S. Korea	U	11/12	Y	Aug 08
Lucy	20	F	S. Korea	M	11	N	May 08
Mie	18	F	Japan	M-U	3	Y	May 08
Son	26	M	S. Korea	M	14	N	Feb 08
Xoan	23	M	Spain	M-U	8	N	Aug 08

Note. SES=Social Economic Status; M=Middle level; M-U=Middle to Upper level; U=Upper level

The cultural values from the larger society and family shaped participants to be well-educated persons with knowledge and global views. However, Alexandra and Jessica noticed that females had to be aware of their behavior. Lucy noticed pressure specifically on women in Korean society. On the other hand, Duan had to take responsibility and care for his family with his male privilege. Interestingly, Xoan seemed not to sense the pressure from social roles like the others. He assumed that he would act the same if he were a woman.

According to reports from participants, their definitions of gender were based on physical differences. Nonetheless, female participants sensed different social roles and

norms on men and women, even noted pressures from the larger society. Andressa, Aqua, and Duan claimed that there was no difference between men and women regarding their competence and capability. Xoan commented that the best way was to achieve equality between men and women.

Most participants did not consider that gender played a role in interactions. Yet only Andressa and Jessica noticed the differences when they worked with males and females. Alexandra and Andressa preferred to work with males. Surprisingly, Mie believed that gender did not influence interactions, but she recognized females talked more than males and organized thoughts differently from men. She even felt uncomfortable when working with males. Interestingly, Duan and Xoan believed that gender did not influence them, but might have an influence on others. Clearly, gender was imbedded in interaction and was unconsciously presented through interactions.

The participants came to the U.S with the same goal of learning English as a second language. They were non-English-native speakers and international students from overseas. According to their English level, they were sorted as ESL and matriculated students or exchange students who took ESL classes and some major courses in the same semester. Under these circumstances, their social relations were affected by their familiarity.

Most participants related to different group members as friends and classmates. Friends were those who hung out together and shared something in common. Classmates were simply the ones who studied in the same classroom. Apparently, Lucy and Mie were aware of their younger age in this class, and related to others as older brothers and sisters. Andressa and Son were conscious of their older age. Andressa tended to act like a leader

when she worked with younger partners. Son showed his politeness and considerations. Son and Xoan pointed out that ethnicity influence their interactions. For example, Son felt difficulty working with Europeans. Xoan felt difficulty in understanding Asians. In addition, Son and Mie noticed that the status of being ESL and matriculated students created their familiarity. Interestingly, none of them mentioned sex as a category related to group members. It seemed sexes disappeared when they considered their social relations to group members.

Each individual presented himself or herself in different ways. For example, Lucy presented herself as a young student, while Andressa noticed that she was the oldest student in the class. Ahmed acted as a leader, while Mie tended to be a follower. Aqua behaved his male role, but Jessica acted as a woman. Son belonged to an ESL student group, yet Mie thought she was not a part of that group. Duan liked to be an ice-breaker who talked first, while Mie acted as a good listener. Son identified himself as an Asian, but Xoan represented as a European. Alexandra socialized in groups, yet Son tried to change from a passive to an active person.

According to Connell (2002), gender is the structure of social relations and their social practices that present through the outside of physical bodies. Based on this definition of gender, I would reconsider the application of this definition and whether gender does play a role in discussions. How would their social relations vary when they were assigned in different types of groups with different partners? The following section presents how gender varies in peer interactions.

Research Question 1

How Are Gender Dynamics Manifested in Peer Interaction?

The participant presented his or her social relations through interactions with partners, who brought their own social relations into conversations. Their social relations were intertwined and connected through interactions, which were revealed in a variety of interactional styles while participating in peer interaction.

In addition, gender is commonly considered as a holistic unit of social relations and social identities. This study did not intend to focus on the shared themes among participants, but instead aimed to view each individual participant as a holistic unit. Gender has been accomplished as participants interacted with diverse partners. Through scaffolded interaction, they reflected gender in the use of interactional styles. The following section shows how participants integrated social relations in dynamic, holistic, and scaffolding ways though interactions.

A Repertoire of Gender Dynamics

The individual participant had his or her own repertoire of gender dynamics, which refers to all the gender behaviors that the individual is capable of performing. Even though variation of gender was viewed from a holistic perspective, this variation was limited to those interactions that I observed. The observed repertoires of gender dynamics appeared only in the speech community of the ESL classroom. However, each participant had his or her own repertoire of gender, which might not appear in this particular speech community but would be demonstrated in other situations such as at home or work when interacting with different interlocutors. Gender demonstration was a prompt and simultaneous event in verbal repertoire or nonverbal clues when the participant interacted

with different partners. No one interactional style would fit in all situations. Even though one or two major themes of gender dynamics appeared in the participant's interaction, these themes did not include all variations but demonstrated a tendency in gender dynamics for each participant. Examples of these repertoires of gender dynamics are presented below.

Ahmed: The More Familiarity, the Less Leading

Different English levels hindered unfamiliarity, which caused Ahmed to become a more knowledgeable peer who provided help to partners. Ahmed tended to act as a helper and a teacher when pairing with female partners whose English level was lower than his. He also acted as a leader in groups. However, his leading role shifted when familiarity increased by sharing interests, having similar interactional styles or English levels. His politeness was present while working with men and women. He also presented politeness through voice volume especially to women.

Different gaps in English levels caused social relations which decreased familiarity between partners and influenced their interaction. Ahmed acted as a more knowledgeable partner when he worked in pairs with females whose English levels were lower than his. He acted as a helper when working on the meaning of comfort zone with Mie. He took most of his time explaining the meaning to Mie, even though he gave Mie an opportunity to speak first. During the break, he pointed out that Mie used "like" too much in her English. Ahmed explained that he tried to help her recognize her mistakes so she could improve her English. If no one pointed out her mistakes, she did not know her problem.

Moreover, Ahmed shifted his role to a teacher when pairing with Lucy, who had a

much lower English proficiency level than Ahmed. Their interaction followed a question-and-answer sequence, when he and Lucy defined the meanings of boldfaced words. He asked Lucy the meaning of words, and then Lucy answered. He also corrected Lucy's pronunciation and asked Lucy whether there were any other words she did not know even after the instructor provided an explanation.

Ahmed also positioned himself as a leader in groups when his English proficiency was superior to the other group members. His leading role emerged in the whole process of discussion by checking group needs, arranging turn taking, and controlling the speed of discussion when he talked with Jessica and Duan about the meanings of lyrics. At first, Ahmed checked what handouts they had already had and what other copies they needed when this group did not get enough copies. Ahmed also took charge of their turn taking. He insisted that Duan explained first and asked Jessica to provide different perspectives as a second reporter. The following is an extract from their group discussion:

> Duan: Okay, what do you think?
> Ahmed: ((laugh)) You gonna go first.
> Duan: Lady first.
> Ahmed: You'll gonna first.
> .
> .
> .
> Ahmed: now, your interpretation what should give us something different.
> Jessica: okay.

Moreover, Ahmed controlled the flow of discussion. He noticed that Jessica had not shared her opinions when the instructor had started talking. Ahmed asked her to speak and said, "Thank you," to Jessica after she reported. It seemed to me that Ahmed's "Thank you" was feedback to Jessica for following his turn-taking arrangement. The following is an extract from a group discussion on the second lyrics:

((The instructor was talking.))
Ahmed: You say anything, come on, because quick ( ).
Jessica: ( ) generation is based on for the chaos, maybe? A lot of war and crazy thing, crazy stuff, and he's try to open up and speak…
Ahmed: Okay. Thank you. ((smile))

However, Ahmed's leading role changed in a female-dominated group. He invited instead of forcing his partners to speak. He thought that he had become a leader because he contributed many of his ideas to groups when working with three females, Andressa, Lucy, and a Korean woman. They selected him as a representative of their group to speak in public.

Ahmed's leading role disappeared when familiarity increased. He had never paired with Xoan, but it seemed that they were very compatible. At the beginning, they kept social distance when Ahmed showed politeness to invite Xoan first. However, they finished their tasks very quickly and left some time for social conversation. For example, Ahmed started social conversation by asking if Xoan was living on campus or not. The following is an extract from an interview where Ahmed described his experience with Xoan:

> I feel comfortable talking to him. I have already known his background, his culture, I already know his age range, I really know a lot about his language, so feel good talking to him. (Nov.14, 2008)

Familiarity played an important role in Ahmed and Xoan's discussion. Their interactional styles seemed to match perfectly. They worked faster and enjoyed their social conversation. Social conversations increased opportunities for familiarity. Moreover, Ahmed's experience with Spanish culture might create familiarity between them, even though the task itself was not related to Spanish culture.

Ahmed's leading role also disappeared when familiarity was increased by sharing

similar interests. As noted, Ahmed acted as a leader in a group with Jessica and Duan. However, Ahmed did not act as a leader when he and Duan did not focus much on the task, which interpreted the meaning of lyrics. Instead, they talked about singers and favorite songs. At that moment, Ahmed did not force Jessica to speak even though she was not involved in the discussion. It seemed that when Ahmed and Duan created their familiarity by sharing interests in music, Ahmed no longer was a leader. Their interaction went smoothly and naturally without arranging any turn taking.

Another example is that Ahmed had more interaction with Andressa than with Lucy and a Korean woman when they defined the meaning of happiness. Ahmed and Andressa shared the same interest of traveling and took traveling as an example of a definition of happiness. Ahmed guessed that he had more interaction with Andressa possibly because his closer physical distance from her, which Ahmed sat right in front of Andressa. In fact, Ahmed was unaware that familiarity by sharing similar interests promoted interaction.

Similar interactional styles and English levels created familiarity. Familiarity generated more interaction with partners rather than leading discussions. Ahmed felt comfortable and tended to have more interaction with Westerners because they shared similar interactional styles and English levels. Ahmed reported that he felt very comfortable working with Xoan, Alexandra, and Andressa. He inferred that their native languages were related to English and their cultural backgrounds pushed them to speak. So he and his Western partners could explain clearly to each other. It seemed that the interaction went smoothly and naturally without leading as familiarity increased.

In terms of the dynamics of gender, Ahmed presented his gender through

demonstrating politeness. As Ahmed's culture shaped him to be a polite and understanding man, his politeness was presented not only when working with Xoan but also with women. For example, he allowed Mie to express her definition of a comfort zone by saying "you began [begin] ." He also asked Jessica which part of his life she would like to hear when they worked on a midterm speech. Ahmed presented his consideration when Lucy could not see the screen clearly, even when sitting in the first row, Ahmed comforted her by saying "I'll read for you. Don't worry."

Ahmed's politeness was also presented through his voice volume when he paired with Mie, Lucy, and Jessica. He tended to speak in a very low volume. However, he spoke louder when he paired with Xoan than with females. He reported that he was raised to speak with men and women differently. The following was an extract from the interview:

> It's a politening [polite] thing. When you talk to girls, you have tendency of talking slowly, talking very low pitch, not shouting, not talking very loud voice…just the way I have been raised. You talk to a male, you have to be outgoing. You have to speak loudly. (Nov.14, 2008)

In conclusion, Ahmed positioned himself as a leader in groups. His role as a leader was noticeable when he worked with Mie and Lucy and in a group of three with Jessica and Duan. Ahmed mentioned that he felt comfortable working with Europeans. However, he noticed that he tended to do much talking with Asians. He felt "a little bit uncomfortable" in this situation. He interpreted that Asians were shy and were learning a new language. He had to be supportive. It seemed Ahmed used ethnicity as a category to separate his different interactional styles with Asians and Europeans. However, he interacted very well with Duan when sharing similar interests. Familiarity was the key to influence social relations between partners.

However, Ahmed did not always act as a leader all the time. He expected back-and-forth interaction with partners. He pointed out that “when you talk to a person, you have to have a middle ground. Everybody have to talk in the same amount. Maybe it could be a slightly bigger amount, but not much.” As Ahmed experienced with Xoan, Andressa and Duan, an invisible factor was salient, but under his recognition. When he and his partners increased familiarity by sharing familiar topics, his leading role disappeared. On the other hand, Ahmed presented his politeness by inviting partners to speak first and talking in a lower volume, specifically to females.

Alexandra: The More Familiarity, the More Social Interaction

The dynamics of gender varied depending on the level of familiarity. With an unfamiliar partner, Alexandra focused on the task and lacked social conversation. As familiarity was increased in pairs, she felt relaxed and had more social conversations. However, the levels of familiarity varied in groups when working with two members who had much closer social relations to each other. For example, Alexandra stayed behind when Andressa and Lucy were more with familiar each other; and Alexandra had more interaction with Duan rather than with Mie because Alexandra felt at ease to communicate with Duan. The familiarity between Alexandra and Xoan did not hinder second language learning. Instead, they had more understanding even without providing minimal responses. Alexandra was aware of ethnicity and sex as categories relevant to interactions. However, these two categories could not provide a clear explanation for the dynamics of gender in interactions. In fact, the dynamics of gender varied depending on the levels of familiarity.

The levels of familiarity were present in interactions. Alexandra and Son lacked

familiarity because they focused on the task and did not have social conversations. They took turns while defining the meanings of boldfaced words. Alexandra mentioned that she liked to take turns and set up this rule because each partner would have an equal opportunity to speak. According to Son's report, Alexandra defined the meaning first, then she said to him that it was his turn. At that moment, Son realized that Alexandra wanted to take turns on their discussion. Alexandra and Son focused on the task only. They did not have any social conversations. It seemed to me that there was an "invisible distance" between them.

On the contrary, familiarity increased and was presented through body language and social interactions with partners. Alexandra looked relaxed with smiles and crossed her arms on her chest when she worked with Lucy to describe their stories of early childhood. She did not use any minimal responses, but looked at Lucy while listening to her story. Furthermore, Alexandra had more social interaction with Andressa before the task. Andressa started the conversation by asking about Alexandra's Spanish tutoring experience and Alexandra asked Andressa's experience on teaching dance for international week. As they started working on picture dictation exercises, they cooperated very well. One had to describe the pictures to the other who did not see the picture on the screen. The other one asked clarification when the information was not clear. It seemed that social interactions before the task warmed them up for closer social relations. Thus, they cooperated very well on task. Clearly, familiarity increased closer social relations through social conversations.

However, familiarity varied in groups rather than in pairs, especially when two partners had closer relations than the other one. The levels of familiarity were presented

by the order of turn taking and help providing. Alexandra had less familiarity separately with Andressa and Lucy rather than familiarity between these two. I observed them to work in a group by taking turns to summarize a narration. Alexandra was the last participant because she did not belong to the small group formed by Andressa and Lucy. I noticed that Andressa and Lucy sat on the first row, which was their favorite spot in the classroom, and Alexandra sat on a chair across the table against the wall. It seemed that Alexandra moved to team with these two women. The levels of familiarity were presented by the order of turn taking.

Moreover, Alexandra was not a first helper when Andressa and Lucy got stuck in the middle of their report. It seemed that Alexandra was not close to Andressa and Lucy. Alexandra reported that she was not familiar with them. At that time, this was the third meeting of class for Alexandra because she did not come to the first class. Nonetheless, Alexandra also created some opportunities to increase familiarity by starting social conversations. For instance, she had a social conversation with Lucy about her country and why Lucy could not write down a summary.

Closer social relations were more salient than closer physical distance to increase familiarity. Alexandra had more interaction with Duan than with Mie when she and Duan sat in the first row, and Mie sat in the second one. At first, Alexandra thought that closer physical distance would influence her interaction because it was easier to talk with one near by. She guessed that she might talk more with Mie if Mie sat next to her. However, Alexandra also noticed that social relations influenced her interactions. She assumed that if she sat in the second row, she would have more conversation with Duan because she felt more at ease to talk with him than with Mie. She guessed that Duan was more open

and sociable, and Mie was shyer. Alexandra viewed that the different interactions were relevant to shyness. In fact, Alexandra was unaware that familiarity, which caused closer social relations, was the key to influence interaction.

Familiarity was relevant to social relations based on the way a participant related to other members. Alexandra related herself to other group members as a student, but she treated Xoan more like a friend rather than a student. Both of them were exchange students from the same university in Spain and took four classes together. This oral communication class was their only ESL class. I observed that they sometimes came to class together. Oftentimes, she sat next to Xoan in the right area of the classroom, in which the majority of male students sat. Clearly, Alexandra was very familiar with Xoan.

However, familiarity would not hinder second language learning if both partners insisted upon using a second language rather than speaking their first language. Alexandra felt okay to speak English with Xoan while working with him in class. She described that if it were only the two of them, they tended to speak Spanish in casual occasions; however, if they were with others who did not speak Spanish, they had to speak English. She felt awkward at first, but she gradually got used to it.

Familiarity also promoted understanding even without using minimal responses. I noticed that Alexandra did not use any minimal responses to Xoan while listening to his story. She explained that as she really knew him, she did not need to use those responses because he might know that she listened to him. Furthermore, she expressed that she felt more comfortable talking to Xoan because she had a friendship with him. It seemed that familiarity did not hinder Alexandra to learn a second language. Instead it promoted conversation even without using minimal responses.

Alexandra used ethnicity and sex as markers to distinguish her different interactions with Asian men, Asian women, and a European woman in this class. She pointed out that Asian men tended to be more open than Asian females because Asian men expressed themselves more easily. The following is an extract about her feelings working with Asian females from an interview:

> You have to take everything out of them. Come on, okay, lets move on to the next question. Try to talk about something, where you live…you have to push them to speak. (Nov.11, 2008)

When she worked with Asian men, she felt that she sometimes asked them questions. As Asian men felt confident to talk, they did not need to ask any questions to keep conversations.

However, culture as an important factor determined Alexandra's interactions and perceptions of other group members by sharing culture and a familiar accent. She noticed that she had more connection with European students than Asian ones, so they continued comments after the task. She inferred that "the culture in Europe is more similar than culture in Asia." She thought cultural difference might influence her interaction because Asians were "not open-minded." She recognized that it was easier for her to understand a European woman because she was used to a European accent. However, Alexandra used ethnicity as a category to separate different interactions with Europeans and Asians. She generalized that she could not have more interactions with Asians because they were shyer. This assumption hindered her interactions with Asians. She was aware of familiarity only based on sharing similar cultures. In fact, familiarity changed the dynamics of gender across ethnicity and sex.

In sum, Alexandra demonstrated gender depending on the level of familiarity with

partners. The levels of familiarity were presented by social conversation, body language, and the order of turn taking and help providing. She kept “invisible distance” without social conversation when paired with Son. She had relaxed body language with Lucy and more social conversations with Andressa. She tended to be the last participant because Lucy and Andressa had closer social relations. Alexandra noticed that closer physical distance influenced interaction and believed that different interactions were relevant to shyness, but was mostly unaware of familiarity increasing interactions. However, the familiarity between Alexandra with Xoan did not hinder their second language learning, instead increasing their understanding even without using minimal responses.

Alexandra used ethnicity and sex as markers to distinguish different interactional styles. She noticed that her interaction varied when working with Asian men, Asian women, and Europeans because she had already acquired her European culture, which made it easier for her to communicate with the European woman. On the other hand, she lacked familiarity with Asians. She explained that her different interactional styles between Asian men and women were due to their shyness. In fact, Alexandra presented the dynamics of gender were not limited to ethnicity and sex, but related to the levels of familiarity with partners.

Andressa: The More Familiarity, the More Interaction

The view of gender dynamics does not disregard sex as the basis of gender, instead, the dynamics of gender varied in interaction depending on partners’ sex and the composition of sex in groups. Andressa recognized that she interacted differently with men and women. When she worked with men, the flow of discussion became faster and easier. They focused on the main points and did not waste too much time. She felt

challenging when working with men. She commented that she preferred to work with men and inferred that her two brothers might influence her ways of interaction. However, with women, she had to pay attention to word choices because women tended to be more sensitive. She disagreed that men and women have the same speech styles. She concluded that “that’s why they are male[s] and females. That’s why men come from Mars, we come from Venus.”

Andressa also noticed that gender varied in her interaction by different compositions of sex in groups. She pointed out that she felt competition if she was in a same-sex dominated group, but felt more cooperation if she was in an opposite-sex dominated group. Andressa had close relationships with Lucy and often provided help. Nonetheless, when a man was in a group of Andressa and Lucy, Andressa tended to have more interaction with the man rather than with Lucy. Her preference of working with men appealed clearly in a female-dominated group. However, a question was emerged that whether Andressa felt competition with other women or with men, when she talked with men.

Familiarity was relevant to closer seat arrangement, which was formed with whom sat around on the regular basis. Sex boundary separated clear seat areas in the classroom, which the left front area was for females and right back area was for males. Seat areas influenced Andressa to build up familiarity with females but not males. Andressa liked to sit on the first row for concentrating on instructions; thus, she often sat with Lucy and another woman. Andressa noticed that she had limited opportunities to interact with men because they tended to sit in the back and very close to each other. Furthermore, she was often assigned to work with partners around her seat area in which

the majority of female students sat. Consequently, she was often assigned with Lucy in pairs and groups. Seat and group arrangement might be some of the reasons to build up familiarity between Andressa and Lucy.

Age influenced social relations in peer interaction when partners had a gap of age differences, especially one from the culture which has to show respect for those who are older. Also, the dynamics of gender was influenced by partners' sex and also scaffolded by the partners. Andressa noticed that she was the oldest student in the class and she tended to take charge while working with women. Andressa paired with Lucy, who came from Korean culture and treated Andressa with 10 years age differences as an older sister or a mother. Even though they were familiar with each other (such as sitting together, taking four ESL classes, and hanging out after class), Andressa acted as a rule maker, controlled the flow of discussion, provided help, and pointed out mistakes. Andressa described that Lucy tended to accept her suggestions working on their tasks. She guessed that she might be the one who established rules of turn-taking before discussion. I noticed that they took turns to define the meanings of boldfaced words.

Andressa also controlled the flow of discussion and provided help. When she and Lucy did not know how to define the meaning, Andressa tended to make the decision to move on the next questions. The following is an extract from their discussion:

> Andressa: I don't know whereabouts, I could guess…
> Lucy: I know the real meaning, but their meaning is a little bit different, so
> Andressa: no more meaning. Pass. ((laugh))

In addition, different English levels were present when Andressa provided help for Lucy not understanding how to define meanings. The following is an extract from their discussion:

Lucy: …hiding means ((using two hands to cover her eyes))
Andressa: don't show yourself.
Lucy: Yes.

Andressa also pointed out Lucy's phonological mistakes when Lucy could not pronounce "seek" accurately. She corrected Lucy's pronunciation from "nk" to "k." However, Andressa did not pronounce long vowel accurately. Lucy just repeated Andressa's wrong pronunciation. The following is an extract that how Andressa corrected Lucy's pronunciation:

Lucy: …Mark called 911 to sink ((seek)) help.
Andressa: sik. ((seek))
Lucy: a sik ((seek)) help.

Familiarity was a criterion for Andressa to decide whether she would point out partners' mistakes or not. She mentioned that if she worked with partners with whom she was not familiar, she would not point out their mistakes. Andressa explained that she and Lucy were familiar with each other and "have [had] some kind of freedom" between them. She thought that she could correct Lucy's mistake and Lucy would not mind.

Even though age played an important role in Andressa and Lucy's discussion, familiarity united them as a unit and demonstrated feminine roles, which were embedded through the low volume of talk. Their discussion was slow and peaceful. It seemed that the unit was formed by a sense of female belonging, which two polite women took turns, gained equal opportunity, and cooperated with each other very well.

The closer social relations between Andressa and Lucy were consistent even with a third person in their group. The closer social relations appeared when help was provided. Andressa, Lucy, and Alexandra took turns to summarize a short story; however, Andressa always acted as the first helper to provide extra information when Lucy could not

complete her report.

The dynamics of gender varied in different compositions of sex in groups. Andressa's interactions varied when a male partner was in a female-dominated group. She tended to have more interaction with the male partner rather than with other females, even though she had closer social relations with Lucy in the same groups. The fact that she has two brothers gave her a familiarity of men in the group. For example, the social relations determined Andressa to point out a male partner's mistakes. She positioned herself as a classmate and friend with Aqua. When she noticed that Aqua did not focus on their task, which reporting his story of childhood instead reporting his life at early twenties, she pointed out his mistakes. She explained that she just reminded him in a polite way. The following is her explanation from an interview:

> If …you would not following the rule, I am gonna telling you, always in a polite way, of course, I am your classmate, I am your friend, I am not somebody better…If you didn't like the way I spoke to you, you have all freedom to tell me…I don't know what he felt. Maybe nothing. Men don't pay attention this kind of thing. That's why I like to work with men. (Nov.10, 2008)

She did not consider too much about how Aqua would feel at that moment due to her perception of male mentality.

Furthermore, sharing similar interests increased familiarity, which Andressa had more interaction with the only man in a female-dominated group. She shared the same interests of traveling with Ahmed in a group of four to define the meanings of happiness. Andressa also noticed that males tended to focus on tasks faster. She had more interaction with Son in a group of three with Lucy. She noticed that she and Son talked all the time and did not give opportunity to Lucy for discussion. The following is an extract that presents how Andressa provided explanation to Lucy:

Andressa: don’t waste your time.
Lucy: Thank you ((flush on face))

Andressa explained that she would like to finish the task faster because she did not feel well on that day.

The dynamics of gender varied depending on partners’ sex and the compositions of sex in groups. Andressa noticed that she interacted differently with males and females. She preferred to work with males because she felt challenged while working with them. However, she had more opportunities to build up familiarity with female partners rather than males because she was often assigned to work with females who sat near by. When she worked with Lucy, age played an important role in their discussion. She tended to be a rule maker, control the flow, provide help, and point out mistakes. It seemed that age, English levels, and closer social relations integrated together to influence interactions. As Andressa had opportunities to work with male partners in female-dominated group, she tended to have more interaction with them. She grew up with two brothers, which created a sense of familiarity with male partners. She pointed out Aqua’s mistakes, shared interests with Amend, and worked efficiently with Son.

Aqua: The More Challenge, the More Negotiation

Chinese culture shaped Aqua as a modest and polite man. He showed politeness and supportiveness to male and female partners. His politeness was presented by allowing partners to speak first. He also presented his supportiveness through using minimal responses. However, Aqua shifted his gender behaviors when he was challenged, especially by female partners. He insisted on his own answers when Jessica pointed out his mistakes. He also grabbed the floor and overlapped conversation when Andressa kept negotiation with Aqua. Moreover, gender could not stand on its own, but was scaffolded

by interlocutors. Two women negotiated with Aqua differently, but ended up negotiation similarly. Jessica took turns while Andressa used overlapping and continuous conversation. Both women stopped their challenge to Aqua by accepting his ideas or explanations. It seemed that Aqua finally saved his face and “won” the discussion.

Culture shaped how Aqua perceived gender. He was a modest and polite man shaped by his Chinese upbringing. He presented politeness and supportiveness regardless of sex in discussions. When he worked with Jessica, he invited her to speak first by saying “after you.” He explained that this was related to politeness. He was taught that people in the U.S. seldom use “lady first,” but use “after you” to show much more politeness. Further, he mentioned that he also invited Duan in the same way. Similarly, Aqua’s politeness was salient in a female-dominated group. He allowed females to share their stories first, and then he followed Andressa’s suggestion of “ladies first” when they worked on the second activity. It seemed he presented his politeness by allowing females to speak first and leaving himself to the last.

Gender was present when a participant showed supportiveness by using minimal responses to partners. Aqua mentioned that he was a good listener. He used minimal responses regardless of partners’ sex. When he paired with Andressa to report their stories in early childhood, he used minimal responses while listening to her story. He also used minimal responses while listening to Son’s narration of a movie and Son’s report of Aqua’s narration. Moreover, Aqua reported that listening was another way to improve English.

On the other hand, Aqua shifted his gender when his female partners pointed out his mistakes. Aqua and Jessica checked their answers after dictation. Aqua read his notes

and Jessica pointed out differences when they occurred. However, Aqua insisted on his own answers even when Jessica had already negotiated with him for several turns. His insistence made Jessica give up. The following is an extract from their discussion:

> Aqua: And I saw my father acting at plays ( ) at first by time, at first time.
> Jessica: Isn't that my father acting in the play for the first time?
> Aqua: Uh? the first of my time.
> Jessica: play for the first time.
> Aqua: at the first time?
> Jessica: No, for the first time.
> Aqua: for the first time?
> Jessica: What I ( ).
> Aqua: I think the play at the first of my time.
> Jessica: Yeah.

Similarly, Aqua did not want to lose face in a female-dominated group when Andressa pointed out his mistakes. Andressa emphasized that Aqua did not follow the task, which required reporting a story of early childhood. At first, he explained his reasons in lower volume compared with Andressa's big laugh. However, when Andressa rejected his explanation, he immediately explained again and overlapped the conversation. It seemed that he tried to stop Andressa from rejecting his opinions.

The tension between Andressa and Aqua released when Lucy jumped in and provided an example. Aqua made an excuse for himself that maybe he had lost his memory at an early age, but Andressa laughed again. Aqua provided continuing statement to support his primary argument. When he noticed that Andressa tried to jump in, he became alert and grabbed the floor. The tension increased immediately by their overlapping and contiguous utterances. It seemed that he tried not to give any opportunities to Andressa until she showed her understanding. Aqua's anxiety and intention to grab the floor was presented by repeating the subject of sentence. The following is an extract from their discussion:

Aqua: …I think it's the ((pause)) big change my life, uh huh I think it'll change my life. ((Aqua reported his story.))
Andressa: But there's the point. You must choose something in your <u>first</u> age
a Korean woman: yeah
Andressa: ((laugh out loudly)) So this is one for the last third ((laugh out loudly))
Aqua: °But, but° I think if we are in the early age, we are, we do anything is uncon-unconscious,
Lucy: unconscious
Aqua: unconscious. We just did everything by nature.
Andressa: Not really. Maybe you can [()your plans, so you can ( )]=
Aqua: [I don't say it will change my life]
Andressa: = and then you hurt very badly, then you get afraid to, to
Lucy: for example
.
.
.
((pause))
Aqua: Maybe I haven't got the memory=
Andressa& Lucy: ((laugh))
Aqua: =about anything my life, my early age.
Andressa: Why? ((laugh))Why you have been doing that? ((laugh)) forgot, bad thing.
((pause))
Aqua: Because when you grow up, your old memory is fake, is fake, fade away.
Lucy: yeah.
Aqua: Old memory is fade away. Because you you get old information in your brain and you got much more, much more, how to say, much more feels of the world of conversation, of how to deal with each other,
Andressa: Do you think=
Aqua: =you, you, you are changing step by step, not=
Andressa: but your [your mind]=
Aqua: [I haven't got]
Andressa: =your mind just limited, you can not, um, say all [information]=
Aqua: [I I I mean]
Andressa: =in your life
Aqua:=I mean my life=
Lucy: just high
Aqua: =change one by one, step by step=
Andressa: okay
Aqua: =not change suddenly, or by a=
Lucy: uh huh
Aqua:=by a accident.
Andressa: all right, I got it. I got it. Naturally change toward years.
Lucy: yeah.
Aqua: because you may face many things…

Gender could not present by itself, but was scaffolded by partners. Aqua shifted his gender from a polite and supportive man to a more dominated man who wanted to get control. He presented his gender in variety because his interactions were influenced by his partners' interactional styles. Jessica took turns while Andressa overlapped and continued a conversation. Aqua used more overlapping as well as Andressa. However, it seemed that Aqua had more desire to grab the floor with Andressa than with Jessica because he was challenged by the continuous overlapping.

Summarily, Aqua presented his politeness and supportiveness shaped by Chinese culture. On the other hand, he insisted his arguments when his ideas were challenged. It seemed that he did not want to lose face when his partner pointed out his mistakes, especially, in a female-dominated group. He grabbed the floor and overlapped conversation to support his arguments.

Duan: The More Social Conversations, The More Familiarity; The More Familiarity, The More Social Conversations

Familiarity developed more interactions, but it was able to be created by breaking down boundaries between interlocutors. Duan sought to increase familiarity by starting conversation. He tended to be an ice-breaker and increased more social conversations, which caused familiarity between himself and partners. The variety of gender dynamics were presented through verbal repertoire which Duan would use in certain situations. He led discussions consciously with a male partner and unconsciously with two female partners. It is an uncertain question whether Duan consciously and unconsciously controlled the discussion because of his partners' sex. Duan was aware that the variation of his interaction was influenced by ethnicity as well as familiarity, but he generalized

that all his different interactions related to ethnicity. In fact, as familiarity created closer social relations, Duan and his partners had more social interactions.

Familiarity increased interaction and reduced social distance. Duan sought opportunities to create familiarity by positioning himself as an ice-breaker, especially working with new partners. He tried to bring up more communication and become closer to each other. With Jessica, he started a social conversation about the length of staying in the U.S., travel, bars, and music, during the break. He was the first one to change the topic of talk. With Xoan, Duan asked first for Xoan's name and showed interest in his hometown, major, and university. Duan increased familiarity with new partners by playing the role of the ice-breaker.

Duan embedded his gender roles as a leader. According to his report, he was aware that he and Son worked slowly because Son's pronunciation was not clear to him. Duan shifted his role as a leader to control the speed of the discussion in the last half of their task even though neither of them was a dominant leader at the beginning. They still looked relaxed and co-operated well on defining meanings.

On the other hand, Duan was not aware of his leading role in a female-dominated group with Mie and a Chinese woman. He reported that he did not notice that he was in charge of the group at that moment. However, I noticed that his leading role appeared at the beginning of the discussion. He suggested to the Chinese female to arrange cards in a clear way for everyone to read. He also set up rules for each one to be in charge of 10 cards. He acted as a rule maker, but he gave equal opportunities to everyone. Moreover, he was the first one to describe the words on the cards and asked females to guess. The Chinese woman noticed that Duan was in charge after he had reviewed several cards. She

said to Duan that “let her [Mie] do [it], why [do] you always do [it]?” Duan explained that the Chinese woman was too young to understand the rule he had already set up. It seemed that this Chinese female was aware of Duan’s dominance, but Duan was unaware throughout the task.

Several questions emerged regarding Duan’s leading roles. Why did Duan notice his leading role in a pair with a man but not notice his role in a female-dominated group? Was it more competitive when he worked with a same sex rather than the opposite-sex partners? Moreover, Jessica noticed that Duan led the discussion while working with her. It seemed that Jessica and the Chinese woman were aware of Duan’s dominance. Are women more sensitive to male dominance? Unfortunately, no further evidence supported on other occasions how Duan was aware or unware of his dominance related to his partners’ sex.

The variety of gender dynamics was reflected by the discourse functions that Duan used for the rules of speaking first. He expressed his gender by using the rules to show politeness, to refuse to speak first, and to give responsibility to his partner. For example, he presented his politeness by inviting Xoan to speak first when he first paired with Xoan. However, inviting a lady to speak first became an excuse for him not to speak. Duan did not want to go first when Ahmed insisted. Duan refused skillfully and indirectly by saying “lady [ladies] first.” Moreover, as Ahmed put pressure on Duan to speak first, Duan put pressure back to Ahmed by using the rule of who speaks first. Duan changed the rule of speaking first as responsibility for turn taking in a series of activities, so he could successfully and strategically make Ahmed speak first.

Ethnicity was a category that Duan used to separate different interactions with

partners, but it could not be generalized to all occasions. He was aware of how familiarity influenced his interaction, but unaware that familiarity was the factor to make gender dynamic across ethnicities. Duan noticed that he interacted differently with Europeans and Asians. With Alexandra, he described that she seemed like a person he had met for only one day. They focused on tasks and did not have much social conversation afterwards. However, I noticed that Duan had more interaction with Alexandra than with Mie in a group of three. With Jessica, he felt “a little bit” familiar with her because they took ESL classes together and shared Asian popular cultures. However, he still had to raise questions, make the flow, and be a first speaker. Duan interpreted that Jessica was shy. In addition, Duan pointed out that his interaction with Son, Aqua, and Lucy were very similar and he could speak fluently with them. He inferred that they were Asians and very familiar with each other because they often had lunch together. He explained that he did not have to raise any questions with Son and could not stop talking when paired with Lucy. It seemed that Duan further categorized his interaction differently with Jessica and a group of familiar friends (such as Son, Aqua, and Lucy) by familiarity even though they were all Asians.

Duan also shifted his gender behavior when he interacted with Europeans and Asians. Duan shook hands with Xoan, not with Jessica, at the end of the discussion. He explained that he felt comfortable to shake hands with Europeans when first meeting them, but not with Asians. He recognized that Asian culture does not expect too much touching. Even though he was very familiar with Son, he did not touch that much.

Familiar topics increased familiarity. It is widely accepted that those who speak less are shy. As noted, Duan thought that Jessica was shy. However, I observed that

Jessica looked very excited and kept talking when Duan and she talked about Korean popular music. I also noticed that Duan and Ahmed continued conversation when they talked about singers and songs. Duan could clearly distinguish his interaction differently between Europeans and Asians. However, he did not realize that familiarity was increased when sharing familiar topics between interlocutors; consequently, familiarity promoted interaction smoothly and fluently.

Familiarity increased closer social relations. Duan had a tendency to seek familiarity between himself and his partners. He developed more familiarity by starting social conversations first. Gender varied as the structures of social relations changed by familiarity. The variety of Duan's gender dynamics was developed through the dynamic interaction in a speech community for second language learning. He varied gender roles as a leader when he was aware of his control with a man and unaware of his dominance with two women. He was aware of different interactions being influenced by ethnicity and familiarity, but tended to generalize all occasions as shaped by ethnicity.

Jessica: The More Familiarity, the More Social Conversation

Familiarity produced more social interactions and increased when connections between interlocutors occurred. Jessica at first lacked social conversations with Xoan and Aqua after tasks, but had more social conversations when she found connection (such as similar interests, experiences, or cultural background) with others, regardless of her partners' sex. Jessica shifted her gender to be an observer while working with two male partners. She internalized the process of interaction and recognized different opinions from two different cultural backgrounds. Being an observer and listener might be a way of seeking familiarity if any connections occurred. Moreover, culture shaped gender

behavior. Behavior patterns learned in Jessica's first culture, such as those regarding social relations were reflected in peer interactions even in a second language setting.

Social relations were presented through social conversations. Jessica had social conversations with her partners depending on familiarity. She had further conversation if she felt connected with partners; however, if she did not have a connection with partners, she tended to stop talking after the task. For instance, she did not have any social conversations with Xoan and Aqua after tasks. The silences became obvious when other groups kept talking and the background was still noisy. I noticed that Aqua played with his pen and Jessica tore at the edges of her notes. They seemed bored and tried to do something to pass the time.

However, Jessica had small talk with Andressa and Mie after tasks were finished, pointing to Andressa's signature and showing her interest in it. Jessica also continued social conversation with Mie because she found that Mie's mother was from Korea and Mie lived in Korea for a year. It seemed Jessica found some connection between them, so Jessica kept talking even after the instructor had already stopped discussions. Similarly, Jessica had a lot of social conversation with Duan about traveling and music.

Clearly, as Jessica connected herself with partners with similar interests, experiences, or cultural background, she interacted more with partners. The connections between interlocutors created their familiarity. On the other hand, if she did not find any connections, she kept distance from partners. Social relations appealed more saliently through continuing social conversations rather than tasks they worked on together.

The assumption that speaking less is related to shyness tended to be widely accepted. Jessica reported that she was an observer of two different cultures when

working with Ahmed and Duan. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Jessica:

> Since they [Ahmed and Duan] are from different country, I got these guys think differently. I feel like I was an observer, of two culture. The thing they say are slightly different idea. Is it different from culture?...It was my first time to talk someone from Thailand and Saudi Arabia at the same time. So I was curious. I know [Duan]. I didn't know [Ahmed]. I was curious his personality, his talking style. I was listen to it.

However, Ahemd and Duan viewed that Jessica's lower level of participation was relevant to shyness. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Ahmed:

> [Jessica] a little bit shy, a little bit clam, she couldn't, she didn't explain that much. She is possibly understand everything, but she couldn't explain that much. Maybe she was. As I said maybe she had a bad day or something.

Similarly, Duan mentioned that "I think maybe she [Jessica] is shy that day…I remember I try to insist her to talk…Yeah, yeah, what your idea or something." It seemed that Jessica did not position herself passively as a listener but actively as an observer. She observed and listened to the men's discussions; however, at the same time, she internalized the interactional process and recognized that these men shared "different" ideas. On the contrary, these two men viewed her not talking too much due to her shyness. Therefore, less talk was not equivalent to less learning. She talked less probably because she shifted her gender roles in a male-dominated group. Moreover, she acted as an observer because she lacked familiarity with these men. Actively listening might be a way to establish whether enough of a connection existed to encourage familiarity.

Cultural values shaped gender behaviors. First culture was presented even in a second language setting. Korean culture shaped Jessica to be a person who tended to invite partners to speak first to demonstrate politeness regardless of partners' sex. She invited Ahmed first as well as Andressa. Moreover, Korea has strict rules on behavior by

age differences. Age became salient when working with partners whose culture respects those who are older, even just few years older. Age created social relations between Jessican and other Korean women when they worked together. Jessica had to lead discussion or make decisions in class or after class due to her age, a few years older than they. She presented her first culture even though she spoke a second language in a second cultural setting. Her behavior demonstrated that the first culture regarding social relations also affected interactions even in a second language setting.

Connections between interlocutors increased familiarity, and then familiarity developed in more social conversations. Jessica did not have social conversations with two of her male partners, but had social conversations when she connected with other partners regardless their sexes. Jessica's male partners tended to view her as a shy person because she participated less. However, she internalized her partners' conversation and noticed their different opinions. Jessica's first culture influenced her gender behavior such as inviting partners to speak first and leading conversation while working with younger Korean partners. These behaviors shaped by first culture were present even though she was immersed in a second language setting.

Lucy: The More Familiarity, The Likelier to Show Weaknesses; The More Familiarity, The Better The Comprehension

The dynamics of gender varied regarding showing weaknesses in different social relations. Familiarity between interlocutors minimized the stress to show weakness. Lucy pointed out her weaknesses directly while working with a very familiar female partner, and asked for help while working with majority of females. However, unfamiliarity increased social distance because Lucy felt competitive while working with a male

partner, whose English level was higher. She did not show her weaknesses, instead asking him to pronounce the word for her. In addition, familiarity increased comprehension regardless of different interactional styles. Lucy tended to believe that she could not communicate well because of ethnicity, which influenced different interactional styles. In fact, familiarity promoted communication and increased better comprehension because familiarity changed the structure of social relations, which developed internalization of the process of interaction.

Gender is dynamic when familiarity increased closer social relations and, therefore, reduced stress to show weaknesses during discussions. Familiarity was a marker to signal different ways of showing weaknesses. Lucy pointed out her own weaknesses when working with females. She said “I don’t know” directly and naturally to Andressa when Lucy did not know the meanings of boldfaced words. She also mentioned that she did not understand the main ideas of a narration when working in an all-female group with Andressa and Alexandra. Moreover, Lucy asked help from group members instead of pointing out her weakness directly when she was in a female-dominated group. For instance, “Do I have to write only…?”and “How can I say?”.

However, Lucy varied her gender behaviors by asking help indirectly when working with a male partner, Ahmed. Lucy asked Ahmed by saying “Can you pronounce apology?” rather than saying “I don’t know.” It seemed that Lucy did not want to show her weakness in front of Ahmed, but asked him to pronounce the word for her. The following is an excerpt from an interview that presents how Lucy felt while working with Ahmed:

> When I talk with [Ahmed], I feel competitive. Sometimes, it’s good. Sometimes, it’s bad. I know the vocabulary, but I think about him. Maybe he know the

vocabulary. I think I have to explain. I have to know. I feel nervous.

Lucy's distant social relations with Ahmed changed her way of asking help. Ahmed's better English caused Lucy's anxiety, but at the same time, she was eager to compete with him. It seemed that Lucy obviously changed her gender behavior when working with a man.

Gender was presented by using a variety of ways to show weaknesses directly or indirectly. Lucy showed her weaknesses when working with majority of females, but the differences still existed depending on how many members in the group. She felt free to show her weaknesses directly with Andressa, who had very close relations with Lucy. As she worked with more members in a group, even working with majority of females, she changed to ask help rather than pointing out her weaknesses. Moreover, Lucy asked help indirectly when she felt competitive to work with a male partner whose English was much better than hers.

Social relations between Lucy and her partners were revealed immediately right after Lucy asked for help. It seemed that the persons who provided help not only carried more knowledge but also maintained closely social relations with the questioner. For example, Lucy felt that Andressa acted as a mother or an older sister because of a 10-year age difference. Andressa provided immediate help for Lucy in pairs and groups. Also, a Korean woman helped Lucy when Lucy mentioned that she could explain in Korean but not in English. It seemed that the Korean woman provided immediate help because she and Lucy shared the same culture. The closer social relations motivated the Korean woman to provide immediate help.

Ethnicity was clearly recognized as a category to separate different interactions.

Lucy was aware of different interactions while working with Westerners and Asians. However, under Lucy's understanding of how ethnicity caused the differences in interactions, the major factor was that different interactional styles caused difficulties in communication. Furthermore, she recognized that familiarity increased her comprehension even though her partners used different styles from hers. Lucy felt that she could "not match perfectly" when talking with Westerners. They tended to promptly deliver their opinions and did not "wait for" her. She felt uncomfortable when Ahmed and Andressa dominated discussion. She believed that if she had more time to think about sentence structures, she could explain clearly, but she hesitated to speak English because her English was not good and she needed more time to check the accuracy of sentences before speaking. Ahmed and Andressa's dominance made her "feel small."

On the other hand, Lucy reported in an interview that if she worked with Asians, they understood her and she could fix her sentences before speaking. Thus, when a Korean woman waited for Lucy to guess the meaning, Lucy felt that "she make [made] me improve [improved]." Interestingly, Lucy noticed that she was able to follow Andressa and Duan's thoughts even though they did not give her time to prepare her sentences. She explained that "I know their style or their feeling. I know them. I feel best [when] I don't feel rush[ed]."

It seemed that Lucy clearly distinguished that her interaction varied by ethnicity. However, Andressa was a Westerner and Duan was an Asian. Based on Lucy's interpretation, why could Lucy follow their veins of thinking? Lucy had already pointed out the main point by herself, "I know them." Lucy was very familiar with Andressa and Duan, and the closer social relations transformed Lucy to perceive the process of

interaction. Clearly, even though Lucy did not have time to prepare her sentences, she had already processed the information because familiarity increased her understanding of her partners' logic.

Gender was embedded in verbal interaction, such as showing weaknesses directly or indirectly. Familiarity reduced stress to show weaknesses directly, but unfamiliarity increased social distance; therefore, Lucy showed weakness indirectly. Lucy was aware that communication difficulties were caused by different interactional styles related to ethnicity. However, familiarity minimized the problem and increased comprehension even though her partners' interactional styles were different from hers. Familiarity changed the structure of social relations between interlocutors; thus, it increased better comprehension because familiarity transformed the process of perceiving information.

Mie: The More Connection, The More Familiarity

Culture shaped gender, which was presented in interaction. Mei was shaped by her Japanese culture to be a person who supported others and spoke in lower volume. She used minimal responses to show supportiveness regardless of her partners' sex. She spoke in a lower volume while working with a Korean woman, whose culture also expected women speaking in lower volume. Moreover, the dynamics of gender varied by the variation of the structure of social relations. Seating arrangement influenced physical distance, which increased social distance. Mie's seat in the second row made her have less interaction with partners who sat in the first row. However, her partners interpreted Mie's talking less than other group members to shyness and language barrier. On the other hand, social relations were reflected in physical distance. Mie had a gap of social relations with Ahmed and kept distance from him; however, she felt connected with Son

by sharing Korean culture and sat closer to Son. Mie was aware of her different interaction related to partners' sex. In fact, Mie felt uncomfortable to work with men because she lacked opportunities to be familiar with male fellow classmates in her school life. As familiarity increased, she felt relaxed and interacted with men very well.

Gender roles were shaped by culture. Mie pointed out that her roles as a female and a listener had been shaped by Japanese culture. She demonstrated her gender roles through supporting partners and speaking in low voice volume. When she listened to partners' opinions, she tended to use a lot of minimal responses to support them, regardless of partners' sex, such as Ahmed, Son, Jessica, and a Korean woman. When Mie worked with the Korean woman, Mie thought that no one acted as a leader or listener in their discussion. She felt relaxed because that woman was from Korea. Interestingly, they spoke in a low voice volume. Neither of them knew why they spoke in a low volume, but the Korean female pointed out that Korean women were used to speak in this way.

Seat arrangement influenced interactions because larger physical distance increased social distance. The social distance limited opportunities for participation in discussion. Mie sat in the second row and her two partners sat in the front. Because discussion items were posted on the screen, they had to face the screen. This seat arrangement influenced Mie's interactions with partners. She reported that she behaved as an observer or listener when working with Duan and Alexandra to define the meanings of boldfaced words. Even though Mie noticed that her two partners spoke a lot and acted as leaders, but did not feel uncomfortable about their dominance. She expressed that "It's one of the good way[s] to learn English. Listen[ing] to other's speaking expression[s]." She inferred that she did not participate much in discussion because of seat arrangement.

However, Alexandra thought that Mie's less talk was related to her shyness. Duan did not think that Mie was shy. He agreed that seat arrangement might be a factor, but he guessed that Mie talked less "because of the language barrier." It seemed that the influence of social relations in discussion tended to be ignored. The social relations caused by larger physical distance limited opportunities for interactions.

Social relations were also reflected in physical distance. Mie kept her distance while working with Ahmed. It seemed that an invisible person sat between them. She read her notes and did not have much eye contact with him. Mie mentioned that she felt uncomfortable working with men because of lacking opportunities to interact with male students in her middle and high school life. Moreover, she felt nervous because of his older age and pointing out her mistake directly.

On the contrary, as closer social relations were increased, Mie interacted differently with another male partner. She looked relaxed, smiling and sitting closer to Son. They cooperated very well even though at the beginning Mie and Son seemed hesitant to move to each other's seat area. She turned her head back and looked for Son rather than moving to male's area in the back. While working in pairs, they read sentences together and Mie used minimal responses to support Son's definition, but they did not have any social conversation during the break. Apparently, they were not close to each other, but they worked very well on the tasks. She guessed that because Son and her mother were from Korea; seemingly, Mie found connection between Son and herself. She felt more relaxed and worked cooperatively even though she was not very familiar with Son.

According to Mie's report, partners' sex had an impact on her interaction. She felt

that this was related to a lack of interactions with males during her teenage life. She reported that “I grow up in all girl [girl’s] middle…and high school [s]. I don’t know much about guys [men].” However, she also noticed that her different interactions were based on male partners’ ethnicity, especially Koreans or Japanese. She mentioned that “I didn’t have much time to know about Japanese guys. In Korea, I have some guy friends. I really don’t know about guys in Japan.” However, no evidence supported that Mie would focus on Japanese if Japanese students were in this class. Furthermore, she mentioned that she viewed Korea as her second country. She seemed to identify herself as part Korean. She guessed that if she worked in a male-dominated group, she would feel uncomfortable; however, if there were two or three Korean men in the group, she felt okay. The main factor of Mie’s varied interactions was related to familiarity with partners rather than her partners’ sex.

Culture shaped gender and gender was presented through supportiveness and a lower volume of speaking. Greater physical distance increased social distance, while social relations were reflected in physical distance. Mie’s seat influenced her interaction with partners, and her social relations with partners were demonstrated in physical distance. Mei was aware that partners’ sex and ethnicity influenced her interactions, but unaware that familiarity broke down those boundaries.

Son: The More Familiarity, the More Interaction

Gender dynamics varied in peer interaction depending on familiarity. Social relations appeared in interactional styles, and closer social relations were presented through body language and straightforward interaction. However, Son tended to think of ethnicity influencing his interaction, even though he was also aware that unfamiliarity

affected his interaction. He noticed that he expressed himself in English more difficult while working with Alexandra but not with a German woman. In fact, closer social relations increased familiarity, which promoted better comprehension and communication. Gender is imbedded in the variations of familiarity.

Social relations were presented in interactional styles, such as cooperative and supportive discussion. Son cooperated very well with Aqua even when they were paired in the second class. Son seemed very active by asking questions while he listened to Aqua's description of a movie. He explained that he asked questions because he could not understand Aqua's pronunciation. However, I noticed that his questions were related to what was going on in the movie. It seemed that he mapped the narration in his mind. Son was engaged in discussion actively and cooperatively.

Social relations were also reflected by supporting a partner's opinions. Son used a lot of minimal responses in two situations while working with Aqua. First, when he listened to Aqua's report, he used minimal responses to make sure that Aqua reported accurately. Second, he used minimal responses to show his understanding when Aqua provided information for him. Needless to say, Son actively participated in the task while working with Aqua. Even though they just met, they worked together very well.

Moreover, closer social relations were presented through body language and straightforward conversation. Son and Duan were very familiar with each other, so they looked very relaxed while working together. Son opened his legs widely and crossed his arms on his chest. Duan bent his right knee against the edge of a table. Moreover, their social relations also reflected on their straightforward conversation. I noticed that Son rejected Duan's definition of boldfaced words by saying "Oh, no, no, no". Son explained

that he had a good relationship with Duan, so he could show his disagreement directly, while working with other men or women, he had to show politeness and consideration. In addition, Son insisted on his own meaning, even though Duan tried different ways to explain. The following is an extract from their discussion:

> Duan & Son: Bank robber was feeling
> Duan: light headed
> Son: light headed
> Duan: head
> Son: headed? I think good idea. ( )
> Duan: headache, something like headache.
> Son: light hard [headed]?
> Duan: light head is like, faint is a
> ((Timer was ringing and the instructor was talking))
> Son: light head
> Duan: unconscious. Light head, I'm not sure.
> Son: ((read the sentence in a very lower volume)) just good idea?
> Duan: No, no. It's not good idea.
> Son: Just a part of ( ).
> Duan: It's like, it's like, you know what faint?
> Son: Yeah ((very low volume))
> Duan: Faint? When you gonna faint, light head ((put hand on a table to express faint)).
> Son: just like good ideas.
> Duan: ( )
> Son: I give up. I think good idea. Yeah, light headed.
> Duan: Maybe. ((laugh))
> Son: Good idea. Yeah.
> Duan: At, but because of faint is a ( ). So, anyway, let's move on.

Needless to say, closer social relations between Son and Duan were revealed by their body language and also through their straightforward conversation.

The dynamics of gender varied by different social relations. Son varied his gender behaviors by using cooperative and supportive interactional styles to Aqua and straightforward styles to Duan even though Aqua and Duan were all Asian men. The dynamics of gender was influenced by familiarity with partners, which caused different social relations. Clearly, social relations affected Son's interactions with Aqua and Duan.

Under Son's awareness, ethnicity was a factor influencing interaction. Son paired one time each with Alexandra and a German woman, but his interactions with them were totally different. Son reported that he felt uncomfortable while working with Europeans. Unfamiliarity influenced him to express himself in English. He had difficulties understanding them because he considered their English to be better than his, especially when they spoke very fast. When he worked with Alexandra, they took turns and focused on the task without any further social conversations after the task. Son described that he felt he was talking to a native speaker because Alexandra's English was good and her appearance was similar to Americans. Furthermore, Son reasoned that Alexandra was not close to him and he did not know her very well. He felt that it was hard for him to get closer to Alexandra. At that moment, he felt that speaking English became very hard. It appeared that Son viewed that different English levels and appearances were related to ethnicity, which influenced his interactions. However, he also noticed that unfamiliarity with Alexandra influenced his expressions in English.

In contrast, ethnicity did not exist as a factor influencing interaction when Son first worked with a German woman. They took turns to describe a picture on the screen to each other when one could not see the screen. The activity generated more interaction with each other. I observed that they looked relaxed with smiles and encouraged and gave compliments to each other. The following is an extract from an interview about Son's feelings while working with the German woman.

> I understand maybe 90%. It's good. I don't know why I did it…I was very comfortable. …She is more activity [active], more attractive than her [Alexandra]. This kind of thing make me feel like I could approach to her [the German woman]. (Nov. 18, 2008)

It seemed that the assumption of ethnicity influence interaction disappeared. The social

distance was minimized when Son felt closer to the woman. Closer social relations increased comprehension and promoted better communication. However, in the interview, Son did not focus on the activity but how his relations influenced interaction with the German woman. Whether the content of the task contribute to familiarity still needs to be examined.

Clearly, social relations were not fixed by pre-determined categories. Social relations varied through interactions scaffolded by interlocutors. Son assumed that he might not understand partners' meanings because of their ethnic backgrounds. Nonetheless, when interlocutors created closer social interactions, Son understood much of the talk. On the contrary, if interlocutors did not have closer social relations or share familiarity, this might hinder their comprehension of conversations.

Son varied his gender by different social relations. He demonstrated gender in interactional styles when he cooperatively and supportively worked with Aqua. He also showed disagreement directly and insisted his own answers when he had closer social relations with Duan. However, Son assumed that ethnicity affected his interaction while he was aware that closer social relations influenced his interaction. In fact, familiarity caused gender dynamics, which were reflected in interaction, but ethnicity did not.

Xoan: The More Connection, the More Familiarity

Familiarity developed interaction when connections between partners were established. However, Xoan considered familiarity was only based on cultures and ethnicities. Familiarity also could be established when partners shared similar interactional styles. Social relations demonstrated in body language. English levels caused social relations, which influenced interactions between interlocutors. While

working with a shy person, which referred to one's lower English level, Xoan had difficulty continuing conversations. However, seating arrangement, which minimized physical distance, increased familiarity. Familiarity was also affected when a partner expected minimal responses.

Familiarity was the main issue to affect interactions with partners. Xoan was aware how familiarity influenced his interactions, but limited familiarity to partners with European backgrounds. As Xoan described with whom he felt comfortable or uncomfortable to work, he expressed that "It's a feeling that when you feel more connected, …you know…something between you and the other person." When he paired with Alexandra, he felt comfortable because he knew her. He also mentioned feeling similarities between himself and a German woman.

Moreover, social relations appeared in interactions when connections did not emerge. Xoan tended to focus on the task rather than having any further social conversations while working with Asians. He seemed not to find any connection with Jessica and looked serious when they were in pairs. Even though he nodded his head with small smiles while listening, they did not have social conversations after the task when other groups were quite noisy. Xoan explained that "maybe the main reason is different cultural background[s]. We belong to different civilization [societies]. It's harder."

Similarly, Xoan also focused only on the task when he grouped with Asian women, Jessica and a Korean woman. He did not have much facial expression and did not speak after the task was finished until the Korean woman invited him to try some snacks. Xoan seemed to believe that connections were built upon the basis of cultures. He could not cross the boundaries of ethnicity. As the Korean woman started conversation by

breaking ethnic boundaries, social relations between Xoan and the Korean woman might have been changed from that moment.

In contrast, familiarity increased by sharing interactional styles and was demonstrated in body language. Even though Xoan and Ahmed had never worked together, they were very compatible because they used similar interactional styles, which also increased familiarity. They focused on boldfaced words rather than reading the whole sentences, so they finished the task quickly and left a lot of time for social conversations. Xoan reported that Ahmed and he worked in a similar way, in which they only focused on those sentences with which they had difficulties, unlike some Asian students who followed rules and explained sentences one by one. Apparently, familiarity increased by sharing similar interactional styles. Moreover, familiarity demonstrated in body language. Xoan looked relaxed, crossing his legs and sitting back, while working with Ahmed; however, he looked serious and did not have many facial expressions when working with Asian females.

Furthermore, different English levels created social relations in the ESL class. Xoan noticed that a partner's higher English level encouraged him to learn more and generate more conversations. He reported that he felt more comfortable working with Ahmed than with Aqua because Ahmed had more knowledge and Aqua was shy, which referred to lower English level. He noticed that he learned more with Ahmed, who knew more vocabulary. He explained that "if you work with a person with …more knowledge, it will push you to work harder to learn more, more [rather] than…working with a person that [who] doesn't challenge you to improve." Ahmed's higher English level increased closer social relations with Xoan because he had a tendency to get closer to Ahmed for

learning. On the other hand, Xoan had difficulty having more conversation with a shy person, which reflected the person's lower English level. It seemed that Xoan was aware that English levels caused a kind of social relation that influenced interaction. However, whether Xoan's interaction with Ahmed and Aqua was related to cultural differences was an unknown question.

Seating arrangement minimized physical distance and increased closer social relations. Seating arrangement created more familiarity between Xoan and Aqua than Son, even though Xoan thought that Aqua and Son were shy. He noticed that he had more talk with Aqua than Son because Aqua sat behind him. It was easier to talk to the one nearby rather than the further one. He felt that he was more familiar with Aqua than Son. It seemed that seating arrangements reduced physical distances and produced closer social relations which encouraged more conversations.

Social relations were varied and related to minimal responses. Familiarity decreased when minimal responses were expected from a partner who had distant social relations. Minimal responses were not expected when closer social relations had already established. Xoan tended not to use many minimal responses when paired one time each with Jessica, Alexandra, and Duan. He explained that Spaniards used minimal responses while listening. Yet he and his partners worked on specific exercises that only allowed two minutes for each speaker. He felt that he should not interrupt them by using minimal responses and should simply listen. He did not expect verbal feedback such as minimal responses from partners, but was able to notice whether his partners listened to him or not by nonverbal clues, such as their body language and eye contact. However, Jessica felt that she was "talking to the wall" because Xoan did not use minimal responses to support

her. This decreased familiarity between Xoan and Jessica. In contrary, Alexandra did not expect those responses from Xoan because they had closer social relations. It seemed that social relations demonstrated in using minimal responses.

Gender Dynamics, Social Relations, and Familiarity

In this study, gender dynamics tended to be ignored when the participants considered that gender was simply related to sex differences. Based on their definition of gender, as males and females, most of them inferred that gender did not influence their interactions, but were aware that social relations, specifically ethnicity, influenced interaction when they considered with whom they felt comfortable or uncomfortable working. They did not focus on a specific ethnicity or country, instead categorizing ethnicities into two groups: Europeans and Asians. The participants limited gender to males and females, but were still aware that interaction varied by ethnicity. Gender dynamics appeared when participants noticed that ethnicity was a major issue influencing their conversations.

In fact, familiarity helped to explain the variation of gender in interactions but tended to be viewed as less important than ethnicity. Ethnicity was divided into two major groups of Europeans and Asians as an indicator for participants to describe the similarities and differences in their interactions. This category alone was unable to explain the variation of gender in all interactions. However, familiarity explained the variation of interaction rather than ethnicity. Lucy noticed that she could speak fluently and have better comprehension if she were familiar with their partners regardless of their ethnicity. Xoan pointed out that his interaction depended on whether he felt connected to a partner or not. The participants were aware that interaction varied by their familiarity

with partners, but did not consider it as salient as ethnicity.

Familiarity, as a factor, served two functions which mediated gender dynamics. First, familiarity minimized social distance and caused closer social relations. For example, Duan started social conversations to build familiarity with his partners. Secondly, familiarity formed a sense of belonging with certain members. For instance, Mie separated herself as a matriculated student from an ESL group, while Son considered himself as an ESL student who did not belong to a group of matriculated students.

On the other hand, a sense of belonging was formed across sex and ethnicity. For example, Lucy had a better understanding of Duan and Andressa's talk even though their interactional styles did not fit Lucy's. She explained that familiarity helped her to have better comprehension. Evidently, a sense of belonging was formed between Lucy and her partners regardless of partners' sex and ethnicities. Therefore, familiarity changed along a continuum of social distance between interlocutors when social relations varied to form a sense of familiarity.

Gender dynamics were imbedded in verbal and nonverbal interaction by the variation of familiarity. When gender was viewed from a holistic perspective, each individual demonstrated a unique gender composed of different dynamic traits. However, a gender with dynamic traits can not be complete on its own but must be accomplished through scaffolding through interactions. When familiarity caused closer social relations, these relations were reflected in verbal interaction (such as interactional styles) and nonverbal interaction (such as physical distance and body language).

Gender dynamics appeared in their interactional styles, which I discuss in detail in the next section. For instance, Son was very familiar with Duan and felt free to show

disagreement directly but while he worked with Aqua, he used minimal responses to show his agreement and understanding. As he lacked familiarity with Alexandra, he did not have further social conversations with her and felt that it became difficult to speak English. Meanwhile, he co-operated very well with a German woman, even for the first time, because he found it easy to get close to her and then could understand much of their talk. In Son's case, he demonstrated gender in a variety of interactional styles based on his familiarity with partners when gender was viewed from holistic and scaffolding perspectives.

In sum, gender dynamics were relevant to the variation of familiarity in interaction. Participants tended to view gender as males and females and did not consider how gender varied in interaction. However, they were aware of social relations influencing interaction, but limited this awareness to ethnicity. They also noticed that familiarity affected interaction, but did not consider it as important as ethnicity. In fact, familiarity was a factor to increase closer social relations and form a sense of familiarity with certain group members. Gender dynamics were reflected in verbal and nonverbal interaction when gender was viewed from holistic and scaffolding perspectives.

Research Question 2

How Do the Discourse Functions of Interactional Styles Shaped by Gender Relate to Second Language Learning?

Interactional styles occurred when the participants interacted in pairs and groups. Seven major interactional styles were salient in peer interactions. They are: minimal responses, disagreements, repeated utterances, "I don't know" expressions, social conversations, voice volume, and first speaker. The following presents these seven major

interactional styles in order from word, phrase, and sentence level to discourse level and discusses how these styles influence second language learning.

Minimal Responses

Minimal responses are called “back-channels,” which are linguistic forms such as *yeah*, *right*, or *um hum* (Coates, 2004). Coates pointed out that language is much more than grammar and phonology due to incorporating social and cultural factors, leading to the concept of communicative competence. When the participants worked in pairs and groups, they used minimal responses for communication. Expecting minimal responses or not indicated the social relations between interlocutors. Oftentimes, minimal responses were used in discussion but varied in function depending on situations. The following presents that minimal responses function as giving positive feedback to speakers, keeping conversation, and pretending understanding by the listener.

Minimal responses served positive feedback from a listener to a speaker during interaction. A listener tended to give positive feedback to speakers when the participants worked on their tasks. This positive feedback served as understanding speakers’ points, accepting opinions, showing agreement, and supporting ideas. For example, Son used minimal responses while he listened to Aqua’s report about Son’s narration of a movie. Because Son was the one who watched the movie, he checked Aqua’s report sentence by sentence. Son used minimal responses to send feedback to Aqua that what Aqua described was accurate. The following is an extract from their discussion:

> Aqua: There, there, Two guys walking waling in near the area. Um, The po ((police)) open the door, and, and one of the prisoner
> Son: yeah.
> Aqua: came out,
> Son: Yeah.
> Aqua: and they, both of them walking on the road,

Son: Yeah
Aqua: and the prisoner is walking behind the po.
Son: Yeah.

Minimal responses can be used for not only showing agreement, but also supporting partners' ideas. When Mie paired with Son, she used minimal responses to support and agree with Son's definition of bold words. The following is an extract from their discussion:

Son: Mark was confused and they had assumed, assumed is guess something,=
Mie: um hum
Son: =guess something his mother was on her way there. I think that his mother was on her way. He's he is going, maybe he's on the way,=
Mie: yah, yah, yah,
Son: = on the way there.=
Mie: uh huh
Son: =she's on the way to there.

Minimal responses are also used to encourage partners to keep conversation. Aqua reported that his partner encouraged and allowed him to keep talking by using minimal responses. For example, when Son reported a story back to Aqua after he listened to Aqua's narration of a movie, Son seemed not to understand much of the story. Aqua tried to provide information for helping Son to complete the task. As Aqua described the story, Son used "yeah" to show his understanding; meanwhile, Son allowed Aqua to keep talking. The following is an extract from their discussion:

Son: car fall?
Aqua: the car falls down.
Son: Yeah.
Aqua: This happening, they are talking, they are talking here, and the car go, go back. I mean this is the car, one man came out,
Son: yeah
Aqua: one man came out and waiting for a man from the door, they are talking with each other,
Son: yeah
Aqua: and the man the car is going down because there's a, he has a driver,=
Son: yeah

Aqua: =in his car. So the car is going down.

In addition, minimal responses functioned as pretending understanding. Ahmed mentioned that his partners used minimal responses when they did not understand his meanings and sometimes he could sense this situation when it happened. Andressa considered that minimal responses were “funny sound[s]” and were used when a person did not understand partners’ meanings. In addition, Lucy described that she sometimes pretended to understand by using minimal responses because she did not want to interrupt her partners and she guessed if she listened again, she still would not understand.

Participants pretended their understanding, but they also clarified the meaning immediately if they needed. I noticed that participants used minimal responses to keep the flow of conversation even though they did not understand the exact meaning. It seemed that they tried to show their understanding, but they asked for clarification immediately. The following is an extract from a discussion between Lucy and Andressa when they defined the meaning of bold words:

Andressa: I don’t know what is thorough. But evaluation
Lucy: I know, but,
Andressa: thorough, thorough, but evaluation means examinations?
Lucy: Yeah, yeah. Oh, what it mean?

Another example was when Duan asked for confirmation from Jessica, Jessica seemed to use “yeah” to respond to Duan’s question without thinking, but she asked for the meaning at once.

Duan: Hop, hop is jump, ↑right?
Jessica: Right. What is hop?

Minimal responses are short sounds with one or two syllables, but play an important role in interactions, especially when a speaker expected minimal responses

from his or her partners. These responses provided feedback and continued conversation. If the conversation lacked minimal responses, a speaker would lack motivation to continue conversation. For example, Jessica felt that she was “talking to wall” when she did not get any response from Xoan. She further explained that she expected to hear “hum, uh, or short answers, short sound[s]… indicating he’s listening.” Conflicts occurred when the speaker expected minimal responses and the listener lacked of using minimal responses. On the other hand, the listener did not use minimal responses because these responses might interrupt the speaker’s speech. I noticed that Xoan did not use much minimal responses when he worked on the same task once at a time with Jessica, Alexandra and Duan. Xoan explained that he should not interrupt his partner.

Expecting minimal responses or not in conversation indicated the social relations between two interlocutors. Alexandra mentioned that because she had known Xoan, she did not mind whether he used minimal responses or not. However, lack of minimal responses in conversation caused the social distance between Jessica and Xoan. This limited their opportunities for further social conversation after the task was finished. In other words, Jessica and Xoan lost an opportunity to minimize their social distance and increase familiarity, greatly influenced second language learning.

Disagreements

While agreement was presented through using minimal responses, disagreement also occurred during discussions. Participants presented disagreement directly or indirectly depending on their familiarity with partners. For instance, Son and Duan were very familiar with each other, so they used “no” directly to each other. Son explained that he disagreed with Duan’s opinions directly because they had a good relationship, while

he had to show politeness and consideration if he was not close to partners. The following is an example that presents disagreement between Son and Duan:

> Son: He told Lucas that he had to accompany him as his hostage. Take, just take.
> Duan: yah.
> Son: Take him. He had to take him as his hostage.
> Duan: I think company is to be a partner, or something.
> Son: Oh, no, no, no, just without him.

On the other hand, Son disagreed with Mie's definition of "grill" indirectly. It seemed that Son did not know how to present disagreement with Mie at the beginning. Son repeated his sentence and tried to point out that grill did not mean cooking in that context. Later, Son used "I think that…" to reject Mie's opinion indirectly by focusing on his own opinion rather than saying "no" directly to Mie. The following is an example from their discussion:

> Mie: Grill is like cooking, () kind of, you know,?
> Son: I think that so, in that, in that case, in that sentences, is not yah, it's not clear.=
> Mie: =so like, u::m how to say,
> Son: I think that press, press,=
> Mie: yah, yah.
> Son: =press important something.

Evidently, Son understood the rules of showing disagreement by familiarity. He sensed the different levels of familiarity between himself and his partners. He presented disagreement directly as he had closer social relations with Duan. When he noticed that he could not directly reject to Mie's idea, he revised his expression by showing that his opinions were different from Mie's rather than indicating the differences directly. In fact, participants mastered their English beyond linguistic levels to sociocultural levels as they manipulated the variations of disagreement.

Repeated Utterances

Repeated utterances were composed of words, phrases, or short sentences. Participants oftentimes repeated some of their partners' utterances during discussion. These repeated utterances functioned similarly to minimal responses, such as showing understanding, confirmation, acceptance, and agreement. Participants sent positive feedback to their partners for their attention in discussions. On the other hand, participants reflected their limited English, which lacked a variety of vocabulary, by repeating partners' utterances. Also, they repeated utterances when their partners had a slightly higher English level using those utterances than they did. Meanwhile, they memorized those words through a mental process, which could internalize utterances to expand their capacity of English usage.

Repeated utterances were used for presenting understanding to speakers. Ahmed and Xoan both pointed out that their partners presented their understanding by repeating some utterances. For example, when Aqua listened to Son's description of a movie, Aqua repeated Son's utterances to show understanding. The following is an excerpt from their discussion:

> Son: …He taking a boat, yeah, and then boat is gone.
> Aqua: boat is gone.
> Son: yah.

However, repeated utterances could also function to ask for confirmation. In the same activity, after Son changed his information, Aqua repeated Son's utterances for confirmation. The following is an excerpt from their discussion:

> Son: …The prisoner yeah, prisoner start to, prisoner start, yeah, oh <u>no no no no no</u>, the robber, the robber shot the prisoner.
> Aqua: Um hum. The robber shot the prisoner.
> Son: Prisoner, yeah. Prisoner, right.

In addition, repeated utterances functioned to communicate acceptance. For example, Andressa summarized a story to partners after listening to a narration. She repeated Lucy's utterances after Lucy provided help for her task. Andressa used repetition to present her acceptance so that she could continue her summary. The following is an example from their discussion:

> Andressa: …And it starts when his mom and dad's, um
> Lucy: was fighting
> Andressa: was fighting, and so he…

Moreover, repetition served to show agreement. Andressa described that "sometimes the person can told [tell] what the first person told, because it's agreement." For instance, when Mie defined the meanings of bold words with a Korean woman, Mie repeated the woman's utterances to demonstrate her agreement. Interestingly, Mie used both repeated utterances and a minimal response to show agreement. The following is an extract from their discussion:

> Mie: Mark asked Reggie how much she would charge to represent him. To
> Korean woman: To be a lawyer,
> Mie: Yah. To be a lawyer, yah.

Participants repeated words when they lacked a variety of vocabulary; meanwhile they memorized the words to increase their capacity of English vocabulary and expressions. Lucy reported that her repetition was due to lack of vocabulary. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Lucy:

> Because we don't know many vocabulary, I have to use this vocabulary, but my partner use already. I want to change the vocabulary, but I don't know, so I just follow. If I don't use, I can't make the sentence, or I can't say directly. My partner use that vocabulary means they understand. So I use that vocabulary easily. (Nov. 15, 2008)

Andressa pointed out that "the person is repeating to learn because you speak up, you

listen to your voice, then you'll memorizing." For example, Duan did not remember the word "unique." After Jessica reminded him, Duan repeated it immediately. It seemed that Duan not only demonstrated his agreement but also memorized that word at the same time. The following is an excerpt from their discussion:

> Duan: Yeah, her writing is very ((pause)) u-
> Jessica: unique.
> Duan: yeah, unique.

Repeated utterances not only served for communicative functions similarly to minimal responses for positive feedback, but they also reflected that participants lacked a variety of vocabulary. As participants repeated utterances, they simultaneously internalized these utterances and the usage of English. This repetition increased participants' opportunities to expand their capacity of English usage. The help provided by the first speaker generated practice for the second speaker in the target language.

Clearly, the first speaker carried more information or more English knowledge, so the second speaker could follow. The slightly higher level of knowledge built social relations between the partners. The knowledge receiver tended to follow the provider. As we further consider the social relations between the information or knowledge provider and receiver, such as Son and Aqua, Lucy and Andressa, a Korean woman and Mie, and Jessica and Duan, they had closer social relations to each other.

"I Don't Know" Expressions

"I don't know" is a short sentence that means the speakers do not understand the meaning. This sentence often occurred when participants worked on the meanings of boldfaced words. The activity itself created a situation in which participants might encounter unknown vocabulary and guess the meanings from its context after they

watched a movie and read the narrative sentence by sentence.

"I don't know" expressions served four functions. First, the use of "I don't know" reflected the social relations between partners when they felt free to show their weakness and ask help from their partners. Secondly, it appealed to different English levels between the person who said "I don't know" and their partners. The speakers not only pointed out their weakness, but also created an opportunity to learn the target language from the more knowledgeable partners. On the other hand, the speakers released his or her tension about limited English when their partners did not know the meanings either.

Third, "I don't know" was expressed for uncertainty when the participants were not sure the accuracy of the information they provided and when they lacked knowledge to support the first speaker. Moreover, "I don't know" served as a discourse marker when participants tried to guess the meaning or provide information, but were not sure of the accuracy of their guess. They tended to express "I don't know" first, then guess the meaning.

Participants showed their weakness to partners with whom they felt comfortable. They pointed out their weakness when they encountered unknown vocabulary or a more difficult task. The expression "I don't know" often occurred in pairs of Jessica and Duan, Duan and Son, Andressa and Lucy, Mie and a Korean woman, and Son and Mie, when they defined the meanings of boldfaced words about a movie. These participants had closer social relations with their partner. For example, Jessica and Duan had longer social conversations and shared similar interests on Korean singers during a break. Duan and Son took the same ESL classes together every day. Andressa and Lucy always sat together in the first row. Mie considered that Korea was her second country so she felt

comfortable working with Koreans.

Different English levels occurred when the participants did not know the meanings, but their partners could provide accurate information. Meanwhile, learning and development occurred when the information was provided. The following is an excerpt from a conversation in which Lucy showed that she did not know the meaning of “butt” and Andressa provided information:

> Lucy: I don’t know butt.
> Andressa: Butt maybe like the last part of cigarettes, butts.

The similar range of English level occurred when the participants mentioned that they did not understand the meaning, and their partners also did not understand. The partner replied “I don’t know” to the first speaker who asked for help first. The following is an excerpt from Jessica and Duan’s discussion:

> Jessica: What’s plaster? I don’t know that. Okay.
> Duan: ((laugh)) I don’t know, too.

In another case, the partner who also did not know the meaning expressed this in an indirect way instead of pointing out his or her own weakness directly by responding “I don’t know.” The following is an example from Duan and Son’s discussion:

> Duan: I don’t know go off, what is it? ((pause)) That is a,
> Son: That just, you know.
> Duan: ((laugh))
> Son: How can I say?

“I don’t know” served the uncertainty for communicative purposes. The participants were not sure whether the information they provided was accurate or not. The following is an extract from Andressa and Lucy’s discussion:

> Andressa: The cop asked Mark if he had seen the man kill himself, and Mark denied it. ((“had seen” and “denied” were in boldface.)) Had seen is Mark saw the situation. And denied it

((The instructor was talking))
Lucy: didn't tell, tell the truth, I don't know.

The uncertainty was also expressed when the second speaker lacked knowledge to show agreement or disagreement to the first speaker. The following is an extract from Andressa and Lucy's discussion:

Andressa: To the office of the coroner, right? Coroner, maybe the sheriff.
Lucy: I don't know.
Andressa: ((laugh))

Another example is from the discussion between Mie and a Korean woman. Mie used "I don't know" twice, each serving a different function. The first one was to express that she was not sure of the definition she provided. The second one showed that her limited English could not support her partner's definition and she did not know other definitions.

Mie: Sweatshop? Sweatshop? Is it a clothing shop? I don't know ((laugh))
Korean woman: Sweat is like sweat sport.
Mie: Sweat is, I don't know, just skip it, yah.

"I don't know" served as a discourse marker before participants tried to guess meanings. It seemed the speaker told the listener in advance that the speaker simply guessed the meanings and was not sure the accuracy of the following information. For example, Andressa described her story in the early childhood with group members and said "…I was crying. I don't know, maybe I was six." She used "I don't know" to present her uncertainty of the exact age. Another example is when Duan expressed the meanings of lyrics to group members, he said "I don't know, maybe he and she struggle so much." "I don't know" indicated the speakers' intention to guess the meanings or provide uncertain information.

The activity itself created uncertain situations for participants when they defined unknown vocabulary. Participants expressed their weakness when they worked with the

partners with whom they felt comfortable. Learning and development occurred when the partner could provide knowledge or accurate information. However, if both could not understand the meanings, the second speaker replied in a direct or indirect way of showing his or her unknown situations. When participants expressed uncertainty by saying "I don't know," they expressed that they were not sure of the accuracy of information or lacked knowledge to send feedback to the first speaker. Moreover, "I don't know" functioned as a discourse marker allowing a speaker to guess meaning or information. The expression of "I don't know" generated an opportunity for language learning and development and increased social relations as well.

Social Conversations

Social conversations often occurred after or before the task. The social relations between partners determined whether participants had social conversations or not. They tended to consider that cultural background, shyness, and English proficiency level influenced them to have social conversations or not. For example, I observed that Xoan had social conversations with Ahmed, but not with Jessica. Xoan explained that the main reason not to have a social conversation with Jessica was because of different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, Alexandra noted that her partner's shyness was related to continuing social conversations after the task. She described that "If the person doesn't speak much [during the task], we still stay quiet, we don't talking [talk] more. If the person is not shy, we have conversation after work about our experience here." Alexandra interpreted that a person's shyness was related to their amount of talk.

In addition, Ahmed pointed out that the partners' English proficiency levels influenced them to have or not to have social conversations. For example, when he

worked with Xoan, they completed the task faster; thus Ahmed assumed that because Xoan's first language, Spanish, was related to English, meanings were expressed faster and more efficiently. They finished the task quickly and could socialize afterwards. However, when Ahmed worked with Lucy, he explained their task in a variety of ways, but she could not understand his explanations. They could not complete the task before the allotted time. They lacked opportunities to have social conversations. Xoan, Alexandra, and Ahmed provided different perspectives on how they had continuing conversations with partners. In fact, cultural backgrounds, shyness, and English language levels created social distance between partners. These distances became clear markers to determine social relations; thus, social conversations increased familiarity between partners and lack of social conversations caused unfamiliarity.

Participants started social conversations after or before the task. When there was some time left after their tasks and before the instructor stopped their discussion, social conversation occurred. For example, Duan, as an ice-breaker, asked Jessica about her English learning experience and where she came from when they were first paired. As Duan heard that Jessica studied in China and spoke Mandarin from their social conversation, he greeted her in Mandarin. Also, when Jessica heard that Mie had stayed in Korea for a year from their task on sharing stories in childhood, she started a conversation by asking whether she could speak Korean.

Social conversations also occurred before they worked on tasks. For example, Duan asked Xoan's name when they first worked together. Andressa asked about Alexandra's Spanish tutoring experience after Alexandra mentioned that the practice of describing a picture was useful for her Spanish class. It seemed that participants tended to

seek opportunities for social conversations either after or before the task. As well, the conversation was relevant to increase familiarity to understand the background of the partner (such as names, countries, and personal experiences), and to facilitate connections between partners, such as the language they shared.

On the other hand, lack of social conversations occurred, especially in certain pairs (such as Jessica and Xoan, Mei and Son, Aqua and Jessica). It seemed that if no one offered an ice-breaker, both kept quiet. When Xoan worked with Jessica and a Korean woman, he did not have social conversations with them until the Korean woman invited him to try some snack. Before the initial conversation, Xoan noticed his different ways of interaction with Asian women. He explained that Asian women tended to follow the instructor's rules, whereas he worked with Ahmed, he focused on the parts which he did not understand. It seemed that the different interactional styles between Xoan and Asian women limited him from further social interactions with them.

Working on the task was the main purpose of learning a second language in the class. However, participants also sought opportunities for social conversations either after or before the task. They felt tense when they had to consciously pay attention to speak a second language for completing the task. They released their stress while chatting with partners. Meanwhile, as participants reduced their emotional barriers, they received more input into their mental process of learning. Therefore, social conversations played an important role for language learning not only because they created opportunities for practice, but also they connected partners and increased their familiarity helping their comprehension when they had better understanding of partners' pronunciation or interactional styles. The familiarity between partners promoted internalization of the

language that their partners used.

Voice Volume

Voice volume in this study was hard to measure by its quantity, but was comparable through conversations when the participants worked with different partners. The lower or higher voice volume was associated with how the participants perceived gender and what social relations they processed between partners. The lower volume revealed a cultural value for men to show politeness to women. It also reflected a cultural expectation for female behavior when one of the partners was from the specific culture. Moreover, the lower voice volume in female pairs represented their female identities and belonging to the female pairs. In contrast, the higher voice volume demonstrated male identities in an all-male group. The higher voice volume of speaking a second language displayed ESL learners' confidence of speaking ability when the activity assigned an equal chance for speaking and when leadership occurred.

Speaking with a lower volume demonstrated how men and women perceived gender from their cultural values, even when they spoke a second language. Men presented their politeness to women by a lower voice volume. Women showed their gender identity and belonging through a lower voice volume when they were in pairs and one of the partners was from a specific culture that women should not speak loud. For instance, I noticed that Ahmed spoke in a lower volume when he paired one at a time with Jessica, Mei and Lucy. Ahmed explained that he was educated to speak in a lower volume with females for showing politeness.

However, lower voice volume was not only presented between men and women, but also between women, especially in female pairs, such as Mie and a Korean woman,

and Andressa and Lucy. Jessica mentioned that Korean culture expected that women should not speak too loud. The Korean woman also described that Korean women were accustomed to speak in a lower volume. Yet Andressa spoke in a lower volume when pairing with Lucy, but not with Alexandra and with male partners. Interestingly, I observed Andressa and Lucy in different groups, but their voice volume was not as low as they worked in pairs, even when they worked with Alexandra in a group of three females. It seemed that women unconsciously presented their gender ideology and belonging through lower voice volume, especially when one of the partners was from the culture that women should not speak loud. The sense of belonging as female was salient in female pairs when a female's cultural behavior influenced the other female partner's. Speaking in a lower volume between women in pairs illustrated cultural accommodation, where one partner adopted the other partner's cultural value on female behavior.

On the contrary, higher voice volume occurred in male pairs and groups. I observed Ahmed spoke louder with Xoan. Ahmed explained that his Arabic culture expected him to speak loudly with males. I also heard that an all male group spoke in a very loud volume from the back when I was in the front of the classroom. The instructor also noticed that men spoke loud in all male groups. It seemed that men presented their gender identity and belonging through higher voice volume. However, I lacked evidence to observe all male groups because a married Arabic man could not work with females and thus he refused to be my participant.

A higher voice volume was also relevant to ESL learners' confidence in their speaking competence. The task, which generated an equal chance to speak, and leadership influenced speakers using higher voice volume. I noticed that Lucy spoke

louder when the task provided an equal opportunity for Lucy and Alexandra each to speak for two minutes. During Lucy's report of her story in early childhood, she made good use of time and was not interrupted by Alexandra. It seemed that Lucy became confident to speak English because she had an opportunity to express her English. Lucy tended to evaluate her English by how much talk she participated in discussion. She mentioned that if she could talk in discussion, it meant that she could express in English.

On the other hand, leadership generated confidence by showing a higher voice volume. I noticed that Son spoke louder and more confidently with Aqua than with Duan. I guessed that Son became confident while talking with Aqua because Son led the speed of discussion and read the sentences which they had to work on. However, Son spoke in a lower volume with Duan because Duan acted the same role as Son did with Aqua, which controlled the speed of discussion, especially in the last half of their discussion.

In the process of learning a second language, lower voice volume could hinder comprehension of interaction. Lucy expressed that she tended to focus on Ahmed's lower voice which interfered with their conversation. Similarly, Duan reported that he did not understand what word Aqua spoke because of Aqua's lower voice, which caused difficult communication. On the contrary, speaking a second language with higher voice volume reflected the speaker's confidence.

Voice volume was hardly measured by its quantity in my research, but was compared when participants worked with different partners. Voice volume reflected a cultural value of politeness and cultural expectation on female behavior. On the other hand, it also presented speakers' confidence while speaking a second language when the task created an equal opportunity to speak and leadership occurred. Lower voice volume

hindered comprehension of interaction and higher voice volume increased the speaker's confidence while speaking a second language.

First Speaker

When the participants worked in pairs and groups, certain unspoken rules determined who would be the first or second speaker. They tended to allow partners to speak first when they expressed their cultural values for politeness or hesitated to be the first. On the other hand, they were willing to speak first when participants were familiar with partners and topics. Also, when participants worked on a series of activities, they tried to gain permission from partners if they wanted to speak first. If a group member played a significant role as a leader, this leader might arrange who should speak first. In addition, being the first to speak was a way of exercising privilege in a female dominated group.

Participants tended to be a second speaker by inviting partners to go first or hesitating to be first, when they encountered English difficulties, lacked motivation to participate, paired with unfamiliar partners, and worked on unfamiliar topics. They invited partners to speak first for showing their politeness, especially when they worked in pairs. For example, Ahmed said "You began" to Mie; Duan said "You first" to Xoan; Aqua said "After you" to Jessica; and Jessica said "You go first" to Ahmed. It seemed that inviting a partner to speak first was observed across sex boundaries. There were no specific rules for only men inviting women. Ahmed explained that he was polite to women by inviting them to speak first. However, he also mentioned that if his female partners invited him to go first, he would. In addition, Jessica noted that inviting partners first was her style related to Korean culture regardless of her partners' sex.

Moreover, participants hesitated to speak first when they encountered English difficulties, less motivation to speak first, and unfamiliarity with partners and topics. For example, Lucy pointed out that if she did not know the vocabulary, it would be better for her to be the second speaker. She also mentioned that she did not speak first because she did not think her speaking was good. Furthermore, Xoan mentioned that he invited his partner to speak first because he did not want to do the task. Similarly, Alexandra mentioned that “sometimes I get lazy, I don’t want to start.” In addition, participants hesitated to speak first when they were unfamiliar with partners and topics. Lucy described that when she felt uncomfortable with her partners, she would allow her partner to try first and then simply listened. Aqua mentioned that if he were unfamiliar with the topic, he would need more time to think about it.

In contrast, participants were willing to speak when they were familiar with partners and topics. Lucy stated that “When I feel familiar with my partner, I try to talk first.” She also mentioned that sometimes if she were familiar with topics, she would try first. Similarly, Aqua pointed out that if he were familiar with the topic, he would speak first. It seemed that when individuals were familiar with partners or topics, they tended to speak first without hesitation.

Participants tended to ask for permission from partners to follow the rule of one speaker at a time. When they worked on a series of activities, participants took turns. However, they did not invite partners to speak first, but instead asked for permission. For example, when Xoan worked with Duan on a second activity, Xoan asked “Should I start?” Because Duan invited Xoan to speak first in the first activity, Xoan tried to gain permission from Duan whether he should go first again or not. Similarly, when Andressa

worked in a group of three, each one had already taken turns. She would like to know whether she should go first again in the second run, she said “Me?” with a rising tone to get permission from partners.

However, if there were a leader in the groups, the leader might arrange or force partners to speak first. Duan and Son, as leaders, spoke first by reading sentences to control the speed of discussion. On the contrary, Ahmed acted aggressively in the role of leader in a group of three with Duan and Jessica. When Duan tried to start conversation by asking Ahmed’s opinions, Ahmed did not answer it, instead he forced Duan to speak by saying “You gonna go first.” Ahmed also forced Jessica to speak by saying “Now it’s your time.” Jessica felt that by pointing at her to speak was more like a responsibility rather than an invitation.

Speaking first would be an opportunity to practice gender ideology. Andressa mentioned that she was very proud to be a woman. When she worked in a female-dominated group with Aqua, she suggested “ladies first” in their second activity. In fact, female partners naturally spoke first before Aqua without setting up any rules in their first part of discussion. It seemed that Andressa played her female privilege in a group of three females and one male because she noticed the presence of more females. In a female-dominated group, her suggestions would be supported by female partners and accepted by the man because the larger society tended to accept the rule.

Speaking first was not only for politeness to present participants’ cultural values or respect for their partners, but also a communicative strategy for saving face when they encountered English difficulties and hid their reluctance to work on the task. Turn-taking was the most often used method in pairs and groups. Participants had equal opportunities

to speak and shared equal responsibility to complete the task. They asked for permission to speak first. Taking turns to speak first could be a responsibility if taking the opportunity to speak was forced by a group leader. Moreover, exercising gender privilege to grab the opportunity for speaking first could become salient in a female dominated group because the rule of “ladies first” was accepted in a larger society; thus a woman’s gender ideology was reflected in setting up this rule first in groups

Speaking first had more important consequences on practicing the target language in groups than in pairs. It seemed that speaking first did not matter in pairs because each individual had to take turns, especially when the instructor counted time for each turn. Xoan reported that “If you don’t speak first, you’ll speak after him. What’s the difference? The activity is like one time one person, next time is the other person. So you always get to talk.”

However, unequal opportunity occurred when participants worked in groups. For example, Lucy lost her opportunities when she worked in a group of four. She described that “They talk front [before] me, I didn’t get [a] chance to talk. It’s really bad.” She further explained that “I consider my sentence, so I lose my chance.” She hesitated to be the first speaker and finally lost her opportunities for practice. She also evaluated her English by how much talk she participated in group discussion. Consequently, she had negatively evaluated her English.

Summary

The following summary presents how the interpretation of interactional styles shaped by gender related to second language learning.

Table 2

Discourse Functions of Interactional Styles Shaped by Gender Related to SLL

Interactional Styles	Social Relations	Discourse Functions	SLL
Minimal Responses	• Lack of minimal responses causing social distance	• Positive feedback • Keeping conversation • Pretending Understanding	• Limiting opportunities for social interaction
Disagreement	• Relevant to familiarity between partners	• Direct • Indirect	• Mastering L2 in sociocultural level
Repeated Utterance	• Closer social relations between knowledge receiver and provider	• Positive feedback • Reflecting limited English • Reflecting English level • Internalization	• Expanding capacity of English usage
"I don't know" Expressions	• Partners free to point out weakness and ask help from partners with closer social relations. • Different language levels created social relations	• Reflecting social relations • Reflecting English levels • Uncertainty • A discourse marker	• Learning L2 from a more knowledgeable partner • Releasing tension about limit English
Social Conversation	• The more familiarity, the more social conversations • The more social conversations, the more familiarity	• Understanding the background of partners • Facilitating connections	• Releasing stress on the task • Reducing emotional barrier and receiving more input • Opportunities for practice • Increasing

			comprehension
Voice Volume	• Relevant to gender identities and belonging • Different language levels creating social relations.	<u>Low</u> • Politeness • Cultural expectation for female behavior • Female identity and belonging <u>High</u> • Male identity and belonging • Confidence	• Hindering comprehension when the volume was low • Showing confidence with high voice volume
First Speaker	• Speaking first when familiar with partners and topics • Hesitating to speak when unfamiliar with partners and topics • Social distance between partners when asking for permission to speak • Social distance between a group leader and members • Social boundary when exercising female privilege	<u>Partners first</u> • Politeness • Saving face • Unfamiliar with partners and topics <u>Speak first</u> • Familiar with partners and topics • Asking for permission • Forcing partners to speak first • Exercising female privilege	• Losing opportunities to participate in group discussion if not speaking first • Negative evaluation on speaking performance

Note. SLL=Second Language Learning

Research Question 3

How Does Gender Promote Second Language Learning through Scaffolding or Hinder Second Language Learning?

Gender as the structure of social relations created but also limited opportunities for second language learning. As Vygotsky (1978) claimed the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development and social relations contributing to higher mental functions (Vygotsky, 1981), this research question discovered whether gender promoted second language learning through scaffolding or hindered second language learning through unhelpful interaction. The following presents that scaffolding was provided through linguistic, psychological, and social levels. On the other hand, unhelpful interaction also occurred through linguistic, psychological, and social levels.

Scaffolding and Second Language Learning

Nassaji and Swain (2000) claimed that scaffolding is not unidirectional. My study also confirmed that scaffolding occurred in two directions: from higher level partners to lower level ones as well as from lower level partners to higher level ones. As individual participants were viewed as holistic units when they worked in pairs or groups, scaffolding was dynamic, and no one was always the knowledge provider or receiver. Scaffolding was able to be accomplished through three levels: linguistic, psychological, and social. As Vygotsky (1981) claimed that social relations contributed to higher mental functions, I also observed that social relations of participants with different English levels accomplished scaffolding by linguistically providing knowledge and psychologically perceiving information. Social relations also transformed the process of interaction and changed the structures of information to accomplish scaffolding through socially adapting

interactional styles and increasing familiarity.

Linguistic Level: Knowledge

Scaffolding occurred when the participants worked with partners whose English levels were higher than theirs. Eight out of the ten participants reported that they learned more from the more knowledgeable partners rather than from the ones with limited English. The following is an excerpt from an interview that presents Andressa's experience while working with a more knowledgeable partner:

> You just can push yourself hard if you are close to someone who know a little bit more than you or speak better than you or have some other task you don't, so I really think it can improve. It's true. (Nov.10, 2008)

Andressa noticed that she could push herself to work harder with more knowledgeable partners rather than have to keep "telling or teaching someone."

English proficiency levels structured social relations among participants, especially in the ESL classroom. English levels varied depending on situations even though participants were placed in an advanced class based on their TOEFL scores. One might not know the vocabulary, but in other case, he or she might know better the grammar or pronunciation. Andressa and Ahmed specifically pointed out that higher or lower English levels were not fixed but varied. Andressa mentioned that her English could rise from a lower to a higher level. She explained that "Better is just phases not forever. You can be better in something now, but in the future, I can be much better than you if I put my effort." Moreover, Ahmed mentioned that his English was not improved when he provided help, but he could learn from the same partner if the partner helped him. He reported that "I am helping her, but it doesn't help me…when I talk that sentence to Lucy. Maybe someday she will teach me another lesson. It will be helpful for me."

English proficiency levels created social relations among ESL learners, and social relations varied when participants worked with different partners.

The varied social relations caused by different English levels created scaffolding from the higher to lower level partners. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) occurred when two different levels of knowledge were present. The one with more knowledge provided help to the partner who lacked the knowledge. For example, Andressa knew the meaning of "company," but Lucy did not. Andressa explained the exact meaning of "company" and also made a complete sentence in which Lucy could learn the meaning from the context. The following is an example that presents how ZPD occurred in their discussion:

> Andressa: The cop accompanied Mark home. Um, um, he was his company in the way home.
> Lucy: Follow?
> Andressa: Not follow, but together.
> Lucy: Yeah.
> Andressa: They went together home

In contrast, scaffolding could not occur through knowledge providing when one worked with a lower level partner. Mie and Alexandra both pointed out that if they worked with lower level partners, their English learning did not improve. However, this experience would not limit or hinder their language learning either. Ahmed worked with Lucy, whose English level was lower than his. He provided a lot of explanations for her when they defined meanings. Ahmed did not think that he learned much even though he talked a lot. Instead, he provided his knowledge but did not receive new information from his partner. The following is an excerpt from an interview that presents how Ahmed felt about that experience:

> HC: How does that experience influence your language learning?

> Ahmed: Well, it doesn't contribute too much to my English.
> HC: But you are talking?
> Ahmed: Yeah, I'm talking. As I said, it's repeating everything I know, saying everything I already known. I need something new. Not repeating of myself. Repeating things is [do] not make me improve myself as much as gaining a lot of new things.

The gap between different English levels created an opportunity for the lower level partners to learn from the higher level ones. Jessica gave an example about how she learned vocabulary from her partners. The following is an excerpt from an interview:

> If they know the words that I don't know, if their vocabulary is rich, it's helpful. I learn something while I talking [talk with] them…When they speak something, if they use some higher level words, I remind it. Oh, that's [a] good word. I remember it. I'll use it. (Nov.11, 2008)

It seemed that Jessica learned vocabulary from her higher level partners as she noticed she lacked knowledge of vocabulary. She also tried to remember the new vocabulary and practice it. Scaffolding occurred not only at the moment the information was provided but also when the participant consciously learned the vocabulary through a mental process, which was internalization.

Scaffolding was provided through knowledge delivering from the higher level ESL learners to lower level ones. Different English levels, which created a structure of social relations, promoted learning through scaffolding. The ZPD occurred when the knowledge providers sent knowledge to the receivers. However, the higher level ones might not learn much as they worked with the lower ones, but working with lower level partners would not limit or hinder their language learning. The gap between English levels caused learning and development when the lower ones consciously managed their learning through internalization.

Psychological Level: A Mental Process

Scaffolding also occurred when participants learned the target language through a mental process of repeating their partners' utterances. Five of the ten participants reported on how they managed their learning by using mental learning processes when they answered an interview question about how their partners provided help for their English learning. Surprisingly, these five participants were all females. Even though the male participants also used repeated utterances in their discussions, they were unaware that they had mastered the language elements (such as vocabulary or phrases) through a particular mental process. Instead, four out of five male participants focused only on who could provide help for them. The following an extract from an interview with Duan illustrates how his partners provided help:

> They [Son and Aqua] knew a lot more than me, about grammar. They correct my grammar, sometimes idea, how to speak English this way. We come from different culture, different country, different family, same sex, but everything is different. That's why talking with them is all benefit. (Nov. 24, 2008)

It seemed that female participants were more aware of their language learning and knew how to master their learning by paying attention and memorizing those repeated utterances.

Scaffolding was provided here through internalization. Five female participants reported that they tried to master the new language from their partners when they consciously paid attention, memorized, and kept the new knowledge in their minds. For example, Jessica reported in interview that "if their [ESL students'] speaking is very clear and fascinating, upper level, that time I think I wanna adopt that. He's [ESL students are] using fascinating English, I try to remember...[and] keep…[in] mind."

Scaffolding was able to be provided when participants learned from their higher

and lower level partners' mistakes. For example, Lucy learned how to pronounce correctly from a higher level partner. She repeated the correct pronunciation after a Chinese female partner corrected her mistakes. She increased her language proficiency by continuing practicing the word. On the other hand, Andressa and Lucy pointed out that they learned from partners' mistakes. They tended to review grammar rules and correct those mistakes in their minds. The following is an extract from an interview that presents how Andressa learned from her partner's mistakes:

> I think when I am realizing how the way she speak, I'm learning because I synthesizing the rules about grammar, for example, oh, the third person has to use s…I just review all the rules [in] my mind. (Nov, 10, 2008)

Scaffolding was provided through a mental process which was consciously paying attention, actively memorizing, and continually repeating when participants learned the language from higher level partners and lower level partners' mistakes. Social relations created by different English proficiency levels promoted internalization into two directions: from higher level to lower level partners as well as from lower level to higher level partners.

Moreover, the mental process was presented through observable repeated utterances in discussions. When a participant repeated his or her partner's utterances, the participant memorized and practiced the word at the same time. For instance, Mie and a Korean woman defined the meaning of a word, egotistical. Mie tried to use a sentence, "I am best," rather than a precise word to describe the meaning. However, Mie repeated the Korean woman's utterance after the woman provided a more precise word to express the meaning. The following is an excerpt from Mie and the Korean woman's discussion:

> Mie: …Through his egotical ((egotistical)) is like self-centered.
> Korean woman: Uh.

Mie: Like I am best, you know.
Korean woman: Selfish.
Mie: Selfish. Yeah, yeah.

Repeated utterances were observable clues that the participant mastered the target language by using a mental process, which internalized the information into the participant's mind.

On the contrary, the mental process was not observable at the moment when participants reviewed rules in their minds but could be observed when participants practiced out the rules in later conversations. In fact, participants had already learned those grammatical rules. Internalization strengthened those rules in deeper minds and facilitated their capacity of memory from short-term to long-term memory. However, a question emerged: whether reviewing grammatical rules during conversation was relevant to participants' earlier English learning experiences in their home country where English was learned through grammar-translation methods.

Scaffolding through a mental process facilitated second language learning. This process promoted language learning into a deeper level in which the ESL learners stored the new knowledge in their minds. When they orally repeated utterances, aurally heard these utterances, and mentally memorized them, the new knowledge as an input was stored in their memory. The ESL learners presented the stored input as output, when they sensed that similar contexts occurred.

Scaffolding was provided through psychological level when participants internalized information from higher level partners as well as lower level partners' mistakes. Social relations caused by English levels promoted learning from two directions. The observable clues of the mental process were repeated utterances and

grammatical rules when participants practiced their second language. Internalization facilitated second language learning when participants consciously repeated utterances and reviewed grammatical rules in their minds. The mental process of reviewing grammatical rules could be observed in the later conversation, but not at the moment when participants internalized rules. The mental process strengthened the memory of stored information in minds. Participants practice the stored knowledge when similar contexts occurred.

Social Level: Interactional Styles

Scaffolding could also occur through learning a partner's interactional styles. Interaction tended to be viewed as static and to be interpreted that if one talks more, then the other would talk less. However, interaction is not unidirectional, but provides scaffolding and is dynamic through conversations between interlocutors. Partners who talked more encouraged the others to talk more and learn more.

Scaffolding occurred when participants were promoted by their partners' interactional styles. Three out of ten participants pointed out that they had more participation when the partner talked more. Aqua noted that if his partners talked more, he would join with them. Ahmed and Alexandra mentioned that they preferred to work with partners who talked more because they could have more interactions with partners. Alexandra expressed that "I think I promoted more [improved]…when my partner…speaks more." She believed that she had opportunities "to speak more and listen more" because she and her partner had longer conversations.

Similarly, Ahmed believed that he would learn more if his partner talked more. The following is an extract from an interview with Ahmed:

> If my partner say things, it could be interesting, it could be explanation, that will add to my vocabulary, that will contribute to my English. So, in a way, my partner say a lot of thing, it will be helpful for me. (Nov.14, 2008)

In other words, scaffolding occurred when one's interactional styles promoted the others'. When one spoke more, his or her partner was encouraged to speak more as well. Participants and their partners had longer conversations which contributed to both English learning. Interaction was not fixed, but dynamic and scaffolded when one's talk influenced the other's to talk more. One provided scaffolding when the other improved through interactional styles.

Scaffolding took place not only when participants was promoted by their partners' interactional styles, but also when their interactional styles were similar. Lucy tended to think of her sentence structures before she spoke. She felt that her English improved because her Korean partner "wait[ed] for" her. It seemed that Lucy had enough time to express herself. She commented that the Korean woman "makes [made] me improve[d]." On the contrary, Ahmed preferred to work with someone "who can [could] keep up with" him so that he could finish the task early and socialize with partners. When Ahmed paired with Xoan, it seemed that their interactional styles were matched perfectly. They finished the task faster and socialized afterwards. Scaffolding is not unidirectional (Nassaji & Swain, 2000), but when both partners' interactional styles were similar.

Familiarity played a role related to how scaffolding was provided through interactional styles. Participants tended to increase their familiarity through learning interactional styles from partners. They could be encouraged to participate in more discussions if their partners talked more. Consequently, they learned more from their longer conversations. Moreover, when participants and their partners shared similar

interactional styles, no matter the speed of the task, they felt as if they matched perfectly and benefited from the familiar interactional styles.

Scaffolding was provided through a social level when participants increased familiarity through adapting their partners' interactional styles and shared familiar interactional styles with each other. Interaction was not fixed, when one talked more and the other would talk less. Interaction carried its dynamic and scaffolding traits which allowed participants to learn from their partners' interactional styles and contribute more involvement for discussions. The dynamic and scaffolded interaction generated longer interactions in which interlocutors benefited for their language learning. The familiar interactional styles shared by interlocutors also promoted their second language learning. Familiarity played a role for scaffolding through interactional styles.

Social Level: Familiarity

Scaffolding occurred when participants shared familiarity which facilitated closer social relations. Vygotsky (1981) claimed that "social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships" (p. 163). Social relations transformed the process of receiving and perceiving the new knowledge during interactions. Familiarity minimized social distance and increased closer social relations. When participants were connected to their partners, familiarity promoted the cognitive process where scaffolding occurred.

Scaffolding was provided when participants were familiar with cultural background, partners, and accents of English. For instance, Lucy reported that she could "understand very clearly even speak in English" with Koreans because she understood the cultural background such as Korean education, situation, or problem. Duan reported

that he could speak English fluently when he worked with familiar partners. Moreover, Alexandra reported that she got used to European accents of English, and this was easier for her to understand her European partner's talk. It seemed that scaffolding was related to familiarity which caused closer social relations. If participants had closer social relations to partners, they would have an improved understanding and perform better when speaking a second language.

To promote scaffolding through familiarity, social conversations played an important role for learning a second language, especially students from diverse backgrounds in the ESL classroom. According to Alexandra's experience, she expected to have "longer conversations" rather than focusing on the task only. Social conversations created familiarity between partners, for example, Duan and Jessica talked about Korean singers, and Ahmed talked about travel with Xoan. Social conversations not just minimized social distance, but promoted the process of internalization.

Scaffolding occurred on a social level when participants shared familiarity, such as sharing background knowledge, talking with familiar partners, and getting used to accents. Familiarity transformed the process of managing information and minimized social distance. As participants connected to each other, they started longer conversations which generated second language learning.

Scaffolding is not unidirectional (Nassaji & Swain, 2000), but a collaborative (Ohta, 2000) and mediated (de Guerreo & Villamil, 2000) learning process. As individual learners were considered as holistic units, scaffolding was not only promoted by providing knowledge, generating mental processes, but also facilitated by interactional styles between partners and by familiarity with them. Scaffolding helped ESL learners to

acquire a second language not only from linguistic factors, but also from psychological and social factors.

Unhelpful Interaction and Second Language Learning

Unhelpful interaction also occurred on linguistic, psychological, and social levels. Participants faced linguistic barriers when they did not understand partners' accents or pronunciations due to limited English. These partners tended to use their first language for communication. Participants also encountered unhelpful interaction on a psychological level, worrying about their English becoming fossilized, not accepting suggestions, or believing that ESL partners could not improve their pronunciation. In addition, unhelpful interaction took place when participants' interactional styles influenced their conversation with partners. The partners would talk less or focus on the task only without further social conversation. However, participants tended to interpret that shyness caused a person to talk less.

Linguistic Level: Accent and Pronunciation

Unhelpful interaction took place on a linguistic level when participants encountered partners from diverse ethnic groups. Accent and mispronunciation hindered their comprehension during discussions. However, participants positively increased social interactions or negatively set up boundaries to deal with this situation. Nonetheless, closer social relations played an important role to help participants' solve phonological problems and increase opportunities to adapt partners' accents and learn accurate pronunciation.

Accent, which was relevant to specific countries or regions, was a major challenge for ESL learners when they encountered partners from diverse ethnicities. Six

out of ten participants pointed out that they did not understand their partners' pronunciation. Alexandra and Mie specifically mentioned that this situation drew their attention on pronunciation rather than understanding English. The accent hindered participants' understanding during conversation. Moreover, the wrong pronunciation also hindered comprehension. When Duan did not pronounce "sarcastic" accurately, Ahmed kept repeating that wrong pronunciation and guessed the word. It seemed that Ahmed finally understood the word by context. The following is an example that presents how wrong pronunciation hindered comprehension:

> Duan: …Isn't it sa-ki-s ((sarcastic))? Yeah, sa-ki-s.
> Jessica: Yah.
> Ahmed: So where's sa-ka-s?
> Duan: Sa-ka-s.
> Ahmed: Sa-ka-s.
> Duan: Yah. ((pause)) I think=
> Ahmed: Sarcastic.
> Duan: =The first of things very…

Participants showed positive and negative attitudes toward dealing with partners' pronunciation. When participants had closer social relations with each other, they developed positive perspectives of different accents and pronunciation. Aqua was close to Son and Duan. When he did not understand Son or Duan's pronunciation, he guessed their meaning or asked them to repeat. He adapted to their pronunciation after they had known each other for few months. He explained that, "At first we don't understand. After three month[s] or one month later, I can catch what they want to express."

Similarly, Son could not understand Aqua's meaning because of his pronunciation when they first paired together. However, Son noticed that he gradually understood Aqua's pronunciation and had already adjusted it. He explained that "We spend more time to speak English, to have party [parties], to play soccer." It seemed that the

pronunciation problem took place in the first few months when the ESL students first met. They gradually understood their partners' pronunciation because they were close to each other and spent more time together; then they got used to partners' accent and pronunciation.

Participants also had negative attitudes of partners' pronunciation. Four out of ten participants mentioned that ESL learners could not help their pronunciation. Xoan thought that if he constantly listened to the wrong pronunciation, he would use it. Andressa seemed worried that she might be influenced by accent or wrong pronunciation. She said that "I just keep closed my mind and my heart. I don't want to get any influence from this." It seemed that Andressa set up boundaries to avoid negative influence on her pronunciation.

However, social relations influenced how participants understood their partners' accents and pronunciations. Participants tended to worry about the negative influence on their language learning. If they lacked opportunities to socialize, they also lacked opportunities to get used to partners' accents. Accent and wrong pronunciation could be a factor influencing comprehension at the beginning of the semester until participants built up closer social relations. As long as they became familiar with each other, they understood their partners, not only their logic but also accent and pronunciation. Thus, familiarity minimized the social distance, and participants had more opportunities to comprehend their partners' accents and interact smoothly.

Accent and pronunciation hampered comprehension when ESL learners paired or grouped with partners from diverse backgrounds. These linguistic problems might last for the first few months after they met. If participants built closer social relations and spent

more time together, they would gradually get used to these accents and pronunciations. On the other hand, some participants worried about the negative influence on their own pronunciations and thus set up boundaries.

Linguistic Level: Limited English

Interactions would be interrupted, stopped, or hindered by limited English when participants encountered linguistic barriers. They tended to use their first language, stop in the middle of their discussions, and learn the inaccurate knowledge. The closer social relations increased opportunities to speak their first language. With similar English levels, participants could not conquer English difficulties, which hindered their second language learning and development.

With limited English, participants tended to use their first language or get stuck in the middle of their discussion when linguistic barriers occurred. Aqua and Ahmed did not like to work with partners who shared the same language because if partners did not know how to express themselves, they tended to use their first language in class. Jessica mentioned that because international students had limited vocabulary and grammar, they could not continue their discussion when both partners encountered difficulties.

Because of limited English, participants lacked knowledge to judge the accuracy of the information. Alexandra assumed that if she did not have accurate knowledge, but accepted the wrong information from her partners, this would hinder her language learning. This situation could occur in pairs or groups when partners did not have the accurate knowledge, then acquiring the wrong knowledge. For example, Duan and Jessica defined the meaning of balcony, but it seemed that both did not understand the meaning. Jessica accepted Duan’s wrong definition. The following is an excerpt from

their discussion:

> Duan: …Uh, ba-ca-ney ((wrong pronunciation of balcony)), tourists?
> Jessica: Yep, tourists.
> Duan: Tourist.

Another example is when participants worked in groups. None of them noticed that their partner provided the wrong information, but they accepted it. For instance, Ahmed described the differences between fair and unfair, but he used the wrong prefix that carried negative meaning. The following is an extract from a group discussion:

> Duan: …The meaning of fair=
> Jessica: Uh,
> Duan: =is not equal, right?
> Jessica: Not just fine.
> Ahmed: Fair mean equal,=
> Duan: Uh,
> Ahmed: =and infair, not equal.
> Duan: Yeah.

When participants had limited English, they formed familiarity, which increased unhelpful interaction in learning a second language. The closer social relations increased the opportunities for participants to speak their first language if they encountered difficulties in English. With similar English levels, participants could not solve English problems when they got stuck in the middle of discussions and could not judge the accuracy of the knowledge. The closer social relations and similar English levels caused familiarity but also increased unhelpful interaction, where participants could not conquer their linguistic barriers. Consequently, the familiarity hindered second language learning.

Unhelpful interaction occurred when participants had limited English. They switched to speak first languages in a second language setting. With limited English, they discontinued conversation and accepted inaccurate knowledge of a second language. The closer social relations of sharing the same first language and similar English levels

hindered participants to get involved in second language learning.

Psychological Level: Emotional Barriers

Unhelpful interaction occurred on a psychological level when participants increased their emotional barriers. Emotional obstacles were caused by limited English. These negative emotions took place when participants worried about their language levels and were corrected by their partners. Moreover, participants did not believe that ESL partners could help their oral ability in pronunciation. The negative emotions revealed when participants had anxiety to build up familiarity regarding English levels.

Emotional barriers occurred when participants worried that their English would become fossilized and then they would not make progress. Andressa reported that she felt anxious when she noticed that her partner did not make progress. She thought that the partners' speech did not help her and wondered whether her English was the same as her partner's.

Emotional barriers were also present when participants were corrected by their partners. For example, A Chinese female corrected Lucy's pronunciation, and Ahmed pointed out that Mie used too many "like" in her speech. Lucy and Mie both believed that those corrections were helpful for them, but they still thought that their partners were rude to point out their mistakes directly. Further, Lucy mentioned that her partner was not a professor. Mie would like to hear suggestions from native speakers rather than from a non-native speaker. It seemed that they accepted their mistakes, but an emotional barrier still existed because corrections were made by ESL partners.

Participants tended not to believe in their partners' language ability, especially oral ability. Six out of ten participants disbelieved that their partners could improve their

oral competence, such as pronunciation. For example, Duan did not believe that Son could teach him pronunciation, even though I observed that Son tried to correct Duan's pronunciation of "sedan" in their discussion. It seemed that participants preferred to learn pronunciation from the native English instructor rather than from non-native ESL learners with strong accents.

These emotional barriers were relevant to closer social relations. Participants tried to set up boundaries with partners who were at similar English levels as theirs. They worried that their English levels were the same as their partners, were reluctant to hear suggestions from their ESL partners, and disbelieved that ESL partners could improve their oral competence. Instead, they preferred to hear suggestions and instructions from the instructor who was a native speaker with authority and power. The instructor kept a larger gap of social distance and social relations to participants, comparing with their ESL partners. It seemed that closer social relations increased participants' psychological level of emotional barriers. They were reluctant to build up familiarity regarding English levels.

In sum, emotional barriers took place in unhelpful interaction. Participants worried about whether their English was fossilized. They were also reluctant to accept suggestions from ESL partners who were in the similar language levels. Participants disbelieved that ESL partners could help them on pronunciation. Instead, they preferred to hear suggestions from the instructor who had more authority and power, as well as a larger social gap between the instructors and the participants. Closer social relations and similarity of English levels increased emotional obstacles.

Social Level: Interactional Styles

As scaffolding provided help through interactional styles when partners spoke

more, unhelpful interaction also influenced partners' interactional styles when they talked less, which was interpreted as shyness. However, social relations mostly influenced interactional styles. If participants increased their familiarity, they had more interactions; otherwise, they limited their interactions which hindered their opportunities to learn a second language.

Participants tended to be influenced by their partners' interactional styles. They would talk less if their partners talked less. Alexandra pointed out that in this case, she only learned from the task, but "maybe not [learn] much because that person doesn't speak that much." I observed that Alexandra and Son only focused on the task and did not have further social conversation. Similarly, Ahmed noticed that if his partner talked less, this influenced his second language learning because he shared his ideas with partners, but did not receive feedback from them. The following interview extract presents Ahmed's experience with a quieter partner:

> I get everything I know, there's no chance…I'll get anything back. For example, if I say everything and my partner doesn't say anything, in that way, I only repeat myself again, again and again, but it's not helpful. (Nov, 14, 2008)

Participants tended to interpret that talking less was relevant to one's shyness of personality. Nine of the ten participants interpreted that talking less was related to shyness. Two Europeans viewed that Asians were shy. Three Asian men also noticed that one Asian woman was shy. Two Asian women viewed that their own shyness was related to culture. Moreover, an Asian man viewed himself as a shy person. Talking less was interpreted as a person's shyness.

This interpretation of talking less relevant to shyness was present across ethnicity, sex, and culture. Participants tended to interpret that Asians were shy. For example, Xoan,

Alexandra, and Ahmed considered that Asians were shy. Xoan thought that it was difficult to have more conversation with a shy person. Alexandra thought that if that person was not shy, she would ask questions regarding the life they shared such as the city, university, and study. Ahmed felt “a little bit uncomfortable” because he had to speak “85 or 90 percent of talking [talk]” while working with Asians.

Moreover, the interpretation of talking less was also present among males and females. Alexandra considered that Asian women were more shy than Asian men. However, as noted, three Asian men viewed an Asian woman was shy. Ahmed, Aqua, and Duan noticed that Jessica talked less. They interpreted that Jessica’s language behavior was related to shyness. Moreover, Jessica assumed that if a man with shyness worked in a female-dominated group, he might hesitate to talk.

In addition, talking less was viewed as a result of shyness regarding culture. Jessica mentioned that the Korean culture expected women to be shy. Mie described that Japanese did not talk much because of shyness about Japanese custom. Even Son also viewed himself as a shy person. He thought that he gradually changed his style from a passive to an active man since he arrived in the U.S., but still took time to change it.

Participants tended to view that shyness caused a person’s interactional styles, which became talking less. In fact, social relations influenced interactional styles between partners. Participants determined how much they would contribute to their discussions depending on the familiarity with partners or topics. As partners kept further social distance, they did not have more interactions, such as the interaction between Alexandra and Son. In other words, further social relations limited opportunities for interactions. Consequently, they limited opportunities for language practices.

Unhelpful interaction occurred through social interactional styles, in which one talked less and the others would be influenced by the partner's talk. Participants tended to view that shyness caused talking less. This interpretation had been widely spread across ethnicity, sex, and culture. However, social relations were the main factor to influence interactional styles. As participants increased familiarity, they had more interaction; otherwise, they had less interaction, decreasing opportunities to understand partners' interactional styles, logic, accent and pronunciation. Thus, less interaction limited second language learning.

Summary

As gender was viewed as the structure of social relations, which went beyond the view of males and females, gender promoted and hindered second language learning. Gender promoted second language learning through scaffolding on three levels: linguistic, psychological, and social. Gender also hindered second language learning through unhelpful interaction in linguistic, psychological, and social levels. Therefore, as we considered how gender influenced second language learning, we could not only focus on linguistic factors but also psychological and social factors.

Gender promoted second language learning through scaffolding. This study supported Nassaji and Swain's (2000) statement that scaffolding is not unidirectional, and it also supported Vygotsky's (1981) view that social relations contributed to higher mental functions. Scaffolding was provided through linguistically delivering knowledge and psychologically internalizing knowledge. Scaffolding was also provided through socially adapting and sharing partners' interactional styles and transforming the mental process by familiarity.

Varied social relations promoted scaffolding into two directions, which contained the dynamic trait through interactional process as we considered the process as a whole rather than viewing it as moment-to-moment events. Different English levels, which caused social relations, increased scaffolding through knowledge and a mental process. Familiarity also increased conversational flow by adapting and sharing interactional styles. In addition, familiarity also transformed the process of internalization.

On the other hand, gender also hindered second language learning when unhelpful interaction occurred. The unhelpful interaction took place when linguistic factors occurred, such as unfamiliarity with partners' accents and pronunciations and limited English proficiency. The unhelpful interaction also happened when psychological or emotional barriers were increased and social interactional styles were limited by unfamiliarity.

Closer social interactions increased anxiety of being influenced by non-native accents of English and using first languages. Closer social relations caused by similar English levels hindered second language learning and development when they lacked knowledge of the target language to continue discussion and learn accurate knowledge. Participants tended to set up boundaries for keeping away from the negative influence by non-native accents and pronunciations and for rejecting suggestions from their ESL partners. Thus, they did not believe that ESL partners were able to improve their pronunciation. However, familiarity could increase understanding of partners' accents and pronunciations as well as promoting more interaction.

The following table illustrates that gender promoted second language learning through scaffolding and hindered second language learning through unhelpful interaction

on linguistic, psychological, and social levels.

Table 3

Gender Promoted and Hindered SLL in Three Levels

Levels	Promoting SLL	Hindering SLL
Linguistic	Knowledge	Accent and Pronunciation
		Limited English
Psychological	Mental Processes	Emotional Barriers
Social	Interactional Styles	Interactional Styles
	Familiarity	

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As iron sharpens iron,
so one man sharpens another (Proverbs 27:17).

Summary

According to Connell (2002), gender is viewed as the structure of social relations and the set of social practices. In this dissertation, gender was examined in its dynamics from holistic and scaffolding perspectives in the process of varied interaction. Participants' gender practices were considered as a whole including social relations with their partners. As they worked with different partners, they demonstrated their gender in various ways reflected in interactional styles. In other words, their partners also contributed efforts to their gender demonstration.

Three research questions were examined regarding gender dynamics, gender and interactional styles, and gender and second language learning. Several major findings emerged according to these questions. First, two major features of gender dynamics were that each participant processed his or her own repertoire of gender dynamics and the dynamics were related to familiarity. Secondly, interactional styles shaped by gender were relevant to the variation of social relations, rather than limited interactional styles into categories of sex or ethnicity. Thirdly, gender promoted as well as hindered second language learning. Second language learning was not limited to linguistic factors, but also was affected by psychological and social factors.

Even though age, physical distance, and English levels affected interaction based on observations and interviews, the main focus was on how familiarity mediated gender dynamics and second language learning. The 10 participants demonstrated their

individual repertoire of gender dynamics when social relations varied and caused a variety of interactional styles. Participants showed their social relations when interacting with their partners. However, the variation of interactional styles was limited to those interactions that had been observed. The observed interactions were a part of participants' overall repertoire of gender dynamics in the particular ESL speech community.

The repertoire of gender dynamics centered on familiarity. Verbal and nonverbal factors heightened familiarity. Familiarity increased when participants shared similar interactional styles, talked about familiar topics and interests, started social conversation, and minimized physical seating distance. Also, a similar range of English levels contributed to form familiarity, especially in the ESL setting. These verbal and nonverbal factors increased familiarity. Moreover, as familiarity increased, participants uniquely demonstrated their gender in interaction. For example, Ahmed showed less leading, while Alexandra had more social interaction. Jessica had more social conversation, while Lucy was likely to show weakness. Participants processed their repertoires of gender dynamics according to the variation of familiarity in the ESL class.

However, participants tended to view gender as simply males and females and thought that gender did not play a role in interaction. Even though they noticed that ethnicity and familiarity had an impact on interaction, they generalized that the varied interaction was related mainly to ethnicity. In other words, participants were not aware that familiarity played a central role in interaction where gender was imbedded.

In fact, familiarity served as a contributing factor to mediate gender dynamics. Familiarity minimized social distance and changed along a continuum of social distance between interlocutors. Familiarity also formed a sense of belonging among certain group

members, who could distinguish themselves from those who did not participate in their interactions.

Regarding gender and interactional styles, my findings showed that seven major interactional styles shaped by gender appeared in the ESL class. They were presented in order of: minimal responses, disagreements, repeated utterances, “I don’t know” expressions, social conversations, voice volume, and first speaker. Three major features of gender and interactional styles appeared. First, these styles were not limited to a specific linguistic level but included word, phrase, sentence, and discourse levels. Secondly, these styles served different discourse functions related to second language learning. Thirdly, these styles appeared when social relations were considered.

Furthermore, social relations affected interactional styles, which were important for the process of learning a second language. For example, a lack of minimal responses caused social distance and limited opportunities for social interaction. Showing disagreements directly and indirectly was related to familiarity between partners. These linguistic choices reflected how a participant mastered the second language on a sociocultural level. When closer social relations appeared between knowledge receiver and provider, repeated utterances served positive feedback and promoted internalization of learning a second language.

This study also investigated gender and second language learning. The findings showed that gender not only promoted second language learning through scaffolding but also hindered second language learning through unhelpful interaction. Scaffolding was provided and unhelpful interaction occurred through linguistic, psychological, and social levels. In other words, the process of learning a second language included not only

gender as a social variable and second language as a linguistic variable, but also psychological factors.

My study of gender and second language learning emphasized the variation of social relations. Scaffolding occurred not simply because of the different levels of knowledge but also because of the change of social relations. Emotional barriers surfaced when participants had closer social relations which determined the possibility of accepting scaffolding from their peers. When emotional barriers increased, participants tended to reject help which was not requested, particularly when randomly offered.

An interesting finding regarding sex differences appeared when participants thought about how their partners provided help. All five female participants were aware that they managed learning by internalization. However, four out of five male participants focused on who could provide help rather than the mental process even though they also repeated their partners' utterances.

The findings also showed that accent and pronunciation hindered listening comprehension during discussions. Participants used positive and negative ways to deal with their partners' accents of English. They increased familiarity to get used to peers' accents or set up boundaries to avoid negative influence. Participants also doubted that their ESL peers were able to provide help in their pronunciation or oral performance.

Socially, participants were influenced by peers' interactional styles. When their partners talked more, they were encouraged to talk more, which generated more opportunities for language practices. On the contrary, when their partners talked less, they were likely to reduce the amount of talk or lack motivation for further social conversations. Consequently, this might hinder their second language learning.

The following figure presents the relationship among familiarity, gender dynamics, and second language learning:

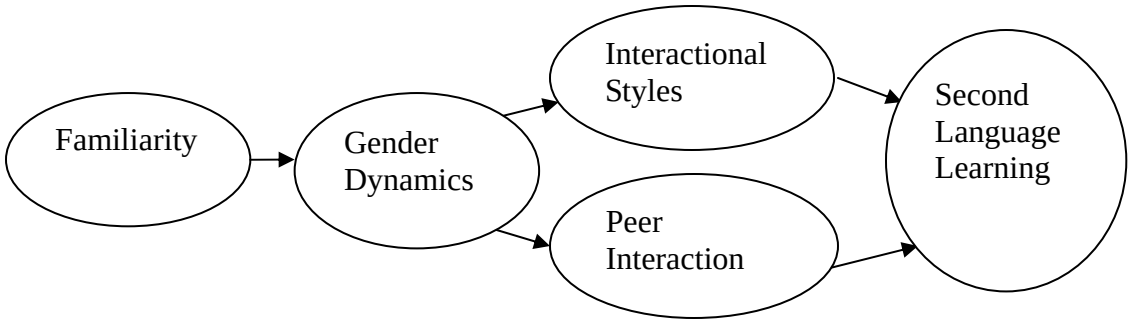


Figure 1: The Relationship among Familiarity, Gender Dynamics, and Second Language Learning

Discussion

The widely accepted definition of gender is restricted to the two categories of male and female. Nowadays, gender goes beyond biological differences and is considered as structures of social relations and sets of social practices (Connell, 2002). Social relations are viewed in regard to ethnicity, race, age, socio-economic status. These relations are pre-determined characteristics similar to sex. As gender is considered as dynamic, a deeper question emerges: What makes gender carry its dynamic trait? Gender carries a dynamic trait when intertwined with social relations and “inseparable” from these relations (Pavlenko, 2008, p. 167). This pattern showed that gender carries a complicated feature but was enable to explain clearly how gender is dynamic.

My study found that gender dynamics carried two important features: an individual repertoire and its relation to familiarity. Each participant processed his or her own repertoires in a particular speech community. These repertoires could be expanded as he or she interacted with different interlocutors, who carried their own repertoires of

gender dynamics into interactions. This view of gender dynamics illustrated not only how gender was dynamic in interactions, but also demonstrated that gender had potential to expand repertoires.

Moreover, the relevance of gender dynamics and familiarity provided another view of how gender became dynamic. Familiarity between participants carried across the invisible border of ethnicity in their conversations. Even though participants tended to believe that ethnicity was a major barrier for communication, familiarity minimized the social distance. Therefore, the two features of gender dynamics were based on the current trend of *diversity* framework of gender and language studies (Coates, 2004; Pavlenko, 2008), but went deeper to understand that the potential capacity of gender dynamics and

The study of interactional styles was not limited to a particular linguistic level. Tannen (1982) focused on the expectations of indirectness, while Govindasamy and David (2004) analyzed turn taking. My findings demonstrated interactional styles appeared in a variety of linguistic levels from word, phrase, and sentence levels to discourse levels. This provided a broader view of how participants varied their interactional styles.

Discourse functions of interactional styles were relevant to second language learning. Govindasamy and David (2004) and my study investigated gender and interaction in the ESL classroom. However, Govindasamy and David compared dominance of males and females in sex-related dominated groups. They also investigated that the involvement of group discussion was influenced by social contexts, such as abstract and concrete topics. My study focused on how discourse functions were shaped by social relations in second language learning. The findings did not present differences

between males and females, but the ways in which interactional styles changed according to social relations changed and how discourse functions related to second language learning.

Social relations were considered in my study of gender and interactional styles. Maltz and Borker (1982) analyzed gender differences in interactional styles, which fall into two groups of male and female linguistic behaviors. Tannen (1982) argued that interactional styles were rooted in social norms. The choices of interactional styles showed an element of ethnicity. However, my findings regarding gender and interactional styles centered on the variation of social relations rather than sex or ethnicity. The choices of using different discourse functions of interactional styles were relevant to the change of social relations.

Prior research of gender and second language acquisition falls into the assumptions of gender as binary dichotomy (Pae, 2004; Rahimpour & Yaghoubi-Notash, 2007), fixed categories (Mori & Gobel, 2006), and different cultures (Brantmeier, 2003). The research tended to view gender as two groups and focused gender differences rather than viewing the variation of social relations. My research investigated the change in social relations and second language learning. The findings concluded that second language learning needed to consider linguistic, psychological, and social levels. Moreover, my research did not focus on sex differences or similarities, but how social relations influenced second language learning.

Johnson (2004) and Nassaji and Cumming (2000) mentioned that peers were able to provide scaffolding. Nassaji and Swain (2000) claimed that scaffolding is not unidirectional. My findings supported prior research and showed that scaffolding was

provided by peers in two directions. Different English levels, which structured social relations, varied as participants worked with different partners. No one was always the knowledge provider or receiver. Scaffolding occurred from higher level partners to lower level ones as well as from lower level partners to higher level ones.

Moreover, my study supported Tudge's (1992) statement that ZPD does not always lead to development due to the nature of interaction. Johnson (2004) mentioned that too much help or withdrawal from help too soon would not cause learning and development. However, my study did not focus on the quantity or the duration of help, instead my findings showed that participants rejected scaffolded help when emotional barriers occurred. The help was rejected when participants did not request it and tended to rejected suggestions from their ESL partners because they had similar English levels. In other words, they preferred to hear suggestions from professors or native speakers of English rather than their non-native peers. This finding also confirmed Lim and Jacobs' (2001) observation that ESL students from a teacher-centered learning background tended to doubt their peer's ability when they switched to a learner-centered learning environment with more peer interaction. Therefore, the study of scaffolding was not limited to whom provided help, but also to the social relations between knowledge provider and receiver.

Even though sex differences were not the main concern of this study, sex differences about scaffolding through internalization emerged. All five female participants noticed the process of internalization. It seemed that they were aware of their mental learning processes and used metacognitive strategies to manage their second language learning. On the contrary, four out of five male participants tended to focus on

who had the ability to provide help. It appeared that females were more sensitive to monitor their learning, while males sought for who had higher status or ability to provide help. Whether sex differences exist in scaffolding through internalization or how social relations affected internalization still needs to be examined.

According to Dunn and Lantolf (1998), second language learners' accent and linguistic failures cannot be viewed as flaws, but as a process of establishing a new identity and gaining self-regulation. My results showed that accents and mispronunciation hindered participants' comprehension during discussions. They also doubted that their ESL peers were able to improve their oral performance. It appeared that participants used native-like pronunciation as a criterion to compare with their ESL peers' accents. They worried about negative influence on their pronunciation by peers and set up a boundary to keep their new identity of learning a second language. On the contrary, when some participants, such as Aqua and Son, formed a sense of familiarity, they were able to cross the border of their second identities and gain control for self-regulation.

Cochran (1996) and Gass and Varonis (1986) noticed that unequal participation between males and females in interaction. Researchers, such as Holmes (1994), Jule (2004), and Vandrick (1994; 1995), suggested that instructors gave equal time for females' talk in the classroom. However, if interaction were viewed as "one talks more then the other would talk less," this would fall into a fixed view of interaction. My study did not focus on the quantity of talk, but instead addressed how participants felt in their interaction. According to participants' points of view, their own interactional styles were influenced by their partners'. When one talked more, the others would be encouraged to

talk more; when one talked less, the others would reduce the amount of talk. Because interaction was dynamic, scaffolding and unhelpful interaction could occur through interactional styles.

Recommendations

Future Research

Diversity framework of language and gender studies and the Z*one of Proximal Development* (ZPD) guided this study to investigate gender dynamics from four perspectives, Dynamic, Interactional, Scaffolding, and Holistic (D.I.S.H). The D.I.S.H. approach assigned that gender carries dynamic trait and demonstrates itself through scaffolding in interaction when each participant was viewed as a whole. This approach provided important insights to see gender dynamics and second language learning in the ESL classroom.

My findings supported Vygotsky's (1981) claim that social relations contribute to higher cognitive functions. Gender is not simply a social variable but also mediates human cognitive development. Future researchers may choose other principles of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as a theoretical framework to examine the relationship between gender dynamics and second language learning.

Case studies about gender repertoires are necessary. In my study, a repertoire of gender dynamics was examined in the ESL classroom. Further researchers may conduct case studies to investigate how participants expand their gender repertoires when shifting English learning from an EFL class in their home countries to an ESL setting in an English-speaking country or from an ESL setting to an EFL setting.

The factors that impact familiarity need to be examined. Familiarity plays an

influential role in mediating gender studies. Even though the findings showed that age, physical distance, and English levels influenced familiarity, the main focus of this study was on gender and familiarity. Future research may address the factors that influence familiarity and provide deeper insights on how familiarity is operated.

Gender studies conducted in different settings are needed. The findings showed that gender was mainly mediated by social relations and familiarity, but this study was limited to the ESL oral class. Future researchers could conduct their studies outside classroom settings or in other ESL classes with different linguistic foci. These would provide a better understanding of how gender varies among ESL students.

This study aimed to examine scaffolding shaped by gendered interaction and second language learning. The findings showed that participants rejected scaffolded help because of emotional barriers, confirming Lim and Jacob's (2001) study that socio-affective factors affect collaborative learning. Studies about social relations between knowledge provider and receiver in the ZPD would be essential for a better understanding of the effect of gender on second language learning.

Furthermore, an investigation of gender and internalization is needed. Sex differences appeared when females tended to be aware of their process of internalization, while males tended to notice who was able to provide help. However, gender and internalization are crucial areas for future research to discover why sex impacts internalization and whether social relations influence the process of internalization.

As Willett (1996) mentioned gender "research as gendered practice" (p. 344), future researchers might be aware of their own gender demonstration in interview questions. I noticed that I unconsciously presented myself as a woman in the design of

interview questions. I often asked a question, such as “How did you feel?” to understand participants’ views. However, I encountered difficulties while interviewing some male participants about their feelings. One of the male participants answered “I couldn’t feel anything,” but this situation did not happen to my female participants. As I noticed my question frustrated some male participants, I changed the interview question to “What were your experiences about…?” It seemed that I used my personal conversational strategies to communicate with participants from diverse worlds. Researchers have to be aware of sex differences regarding the word choices of interview questions.

Future Practice

Familiarity was the major issue to influence peer interaction in the ESL class. Gender dynamics and second language learning were centered on familiarity. Instructors and curriculum developers may design their curriculum by creating opportunities for building familiarity. Participants from diverse backgrounds tended to consider ethnicity as a barrier of communication and set up boundaries when negotiating and constructing their new identity of learning a second language. However, I noticed that my participants shared similar English learning experiences in their home countries, studied in English camps, traveled overseas, and were interested in popular music. The instructor may choose these familiar topics to increase ESL students’ familiarity and break down the assuming barriers.

Social conversations are important for establishing familiarity and learning a second language. Participants sought for opportunities to build familiarity, get along with their partners, and release stress of working on task-based practices. Instructors may design activities which provide more opportunities for students to have social

conversations rather than focusing only on tasks. Social conversations in class are not simply free talking, but include guided or theme-based conversations that generate familiarity.

Instructors may guide students for communicative strategies used for initiating social conversations. My participants considered that talking less was related to shyness. This pervasive assumption hindered social conversations for language learning. According to my observations, participants initiated social conversations by asking something related to their life, such as study, living, and recreation. Instructors may teach conversational strategies to students or provide a role model for their learning.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate gender dynamics and second language learning from a sociocultural perspective after the post-modern turn that gender is viewed as dynamic. The overall themes of gender dynamics and second language learning were centered on familiarity when the dynamic, interactional, scaffolding, and holistic (D.I.S.H.) approach was offered by the *diversity* framework of language and gender studies and Vygotsky's the Z*one of Proximal Development* (ZPD).

Each participant processed his or her own repertoire of gender dynamics which varied by familiarity. Within the repertoire, gender was demonstrated through a variety of interactional styles. The discourse functions of these interactional styles were relevant to second language learning. When two or more persons worked as a group, participants' gender repertoires emerged in peer interactions. Gender as social relations contributed to higher mental functions where scaffolding and internalization occurred and led to second language learning. However, ZPD could not efficiently happen because emotional

barriers increased and hindered second language learning.

The findings reflected that language learning was not limited to the linguistic level but also included psychological and social levels. I hope that this study contributes practical knowledge to instructors and curriculum developers that cognitive development and social interaction are related to familiarity. Increasing familiarity could be a main issue for gender demonstration and language learning in the classroom interaction. This knowledge would add a new approach of psychological and social levels toward second language teaching and learning.

I personally benefited from the results of the research. My view of gender was not limited to sex differences or pre-determined social categories but the variation of familiarity. I also eliminated stereotypes on sex differences in regard to linguistic behaviors. As I noticed that each individual processes his or her repertoire and may have the capacity to expand its potential, I am hopeful that gender and language research will continue in the field of second language learning.

REFERENCES

Anton, M. (1999). The discourse of a learner-centered classroom: Sociocultural perspectives on teacher-learner interaction in the second-language classroom *The Modern Language Journal, 83*(3), 303-318.

Aries, E. (1998). Gender differences in interaction: A reexamination. In D. J. Canary & K. Dindia (Eds.), *Sex differences and similarities in communication* (pp. 65-81). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associations.

Bing, F. M., & Bergvall, V. L. (1998). The question of questions: Beyond binary thinking. In J. Coates (Ed.), *Language and gender: A reader* (pp. 495-510). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Brantmeier, C. (2003). Does gender make a difference? Passage content and comprehension in second language reading [Electronic Version]. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 15*(1).

Brown, J. D., & Rodgers, T. S. (2002). *Doing second language research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bucholtz, M. (1999). Bad examples: Transgression and progress in language and gender studies. In M. Bucholtz, A. C. Liang & L. A. Sutton (Eds.), *Reinventing identies: The gendered self in discourse* (pp. 3-24). New York: Oxford University Press.

Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (1995). Introduction: Twenty years after language and woman's place. In K. Hall & M. Bucholtz (Eds.), *Gender articulated: language and the socially constructed self* (pp. 1-22). New York: Routledge.

Cameron, D. (1994). Verbal hygiene for women: Linguistics misapplied? *Applied Linguistics, 15*, 382-398.

Cameron, D. (1996). The language-gender interface: Challenging co-optation. In V. L. Bergvall, J. M. Bing & A. F. Freed (Eds.), *Rethinking language and gender research: Theory and practice* (pp. 31-53). New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Cameron, D. (2005). Language, gender, and sexuality: Current issues and new directions. *Applied Linguistics, 26*(4), 482-502.

Chavez, M. (2001). *Gender in the language classroom*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Coates, J. (2004). *Women, men and language* (3rd ed.). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.

Cochran, E. P. (1996). Gender and the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 30*(1), 159-162.

Connell, R. W. (2002). *Gender*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.

Davis, K. A., & Skilton-Sylvester, E. (2004). Looking back, taking stock, moving forward: Investigating gender in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly, 38*(3), 381-404.

de Guerrero, M. C. M., & Villamil, O. S. (2000). Activating the ZPD: Mutual scaffolding in L2 peer revision. *The Modern Language Journal, 84*(1), 51-68.

Donato, R. (1994). Collective scaffolding in second language learning. In J. P. Lantolf & G. Appel (Eds.), *Vygotskian approaches to second language research* (pp. 33-56). Norwood,NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Driscoll, M. P. (2005). *Psychology of learning for instruction* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

Dunn, W. E., & Lantolf, J. P. (1998). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Krashen's i+1: Incommensurable constructs; incommensurable theories. *Language Learning, 48*(3), 411-442.

Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (1992). Think practically and look locally: language and geder as community-based practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 21*, 461-490.

Ehrlich, S. (1997). Gender as social practice: Implications for second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 19*, 421-446.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (1997). *Second language acquisition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Frawley, W. (1997). *Vygotsky and cognitive science: Language and the unification of the social and computational mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Freeman, R., & McElhinny, B. (1996). Language and gender. In S. L. McKay & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language teaching* (pp. 218-280). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gass, S. M., & Varonis, E. M. (1986). Sex differences in NNS/NNS interactions. In R. R. Day (Ed.), *Talking to learn: Conversation in second language acquisition* (pp. 327-351). Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publisher.

Goodwin, M. H. (1990). *He-said-she-said: Talk as social organization among black children*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Govindasamy, S., & David, M. K. (2004). Investigating the male voice in a Malaysian ESL classroom. In B. Norton & A. Pavlenko (Eds.), *Gender and English language learners* (pp. 59-68). Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Gray, J. (2004). *男女大不同 (Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus)* (蘇晴, Trans.). Taiwan: 生命潛能文化事業有限公司.

Have, P. t. (2007). *Doing Conversation Analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Holmes, J. (1994). Improving the lot of female language learners. In J. Sunderland (Ed.), *Exploring gender: Questions and implications for English language education* (pp. 156-162). New York: Prentice Hall.

Johnson, M. (2004). *A philosophy of second language acquisition*. London: Yale University Press.

Jule, A. (2004). Speaking in silence: A case study of a Canadian Punjabi girl. In B. Norton & A. Pavlenko (Eds.), *Gender and English language learners* (pp. 69-78). Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Kinginger, C. (2002). Defining the zone of proximal development in US foreign language education. *Applied Linguistics, 23*(2), 240-261.

Krashen, S. (1980). The input hypothesis. In J. E. Alatis (Ed.), *Current issues in bilingual education*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Kubota, R. (2003). New approaches to gender, class, and race in second language writing [Electronic Version]. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 12*(1), 31-47.

Lakoff, R. (1975). *Language and women's place*. New York: Harper and Row.

Lantolf, J. P. (2005). Sociocultural and second language learning research: An exegesis. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 335-353). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Lantolf, J. P., & Appel, G. (1994). Theoretical framework: An introduction to Vygotskian approaches to second language research. In J. P. Lantolf & G. Appel (Eds.), *Vygotskian approaches to second language research* (pp. 1-32). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Levinson, S. (1992). Activity types and language. In P. Drew & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Talk at work*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (1999). *How language are learned*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lim, W. L., & Jacobs, G. M. (2001). *An analysis of students' dyadic interaction on a dictogloss task* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED456649).

Long, M. H. (1985). Input and second language acquisition theory. In S. M. Gass & C. G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 377-393). Cambridge, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

Mori, S., & Gobel, P. (2006). Motivation and gender in the Japanese EFL classroom

[Electronic Version]. *System, 34*(2), 194-210.

Nassaji, H., & Cumming, A. (2000). What's in a ZPD? A case study of a young ESL student and teacher interacting through dialogue journals. *Language Teaching Research, 4*(2), 95-121.

Nassaji, H., & Swain, M. (2000). A Vygotskian perspective on corrective feedback in L2: The effect of Random versus negotiated help on the learnig of English articles. *Language Awareness, 9*(1), 34-51.

Nunan, D. (2005). Classroom research. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 225-240). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ohta, A. (1995). Applying sociocultural theory to an analysis of learner discourse: learner-learner collaborative interaction in the zone of proximal development. *Issues in Applied Linguistic, 6*(2), 93-121.

Ohta, A. (2000). Rethinking interaction in SLA: Developmentally appropriate assistance in the zone of proximal development and the acquisition of L2 grammar. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 51-78). New York: Oxford University Press.

Oxford, R. L. (1995). Gender differences in language learning styles: What do they mean? In J. M. Reid (Ed.), *Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom* (pp. 34-46). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publisher.

Pae, T. (2004). Gender effect on reading comprehension with Korean EFL learners [Electronic Version]. *System, 32*(2), 265-281.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pavlenko, A. (2001). Bilingualism, gender, and ideology. *The International Journal of Bilingualism, 5*(2), 117-151.

Pavlenko, A. (2008). Research methods in the study of gender in second/foreign language education. In K. A. King & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education: Vol. 10. Research methods in language education* (2nd ed., pp.

165-174). New York: Spring Science+Business Media LLC.

Phakiti, A. (2003). A closer look at gender and strategy use in L2 reading [Electronic Version]. *Language Learning, 53*(4), 649-702.

Piller, I., & Pavlenko, A. (2001). Introduction: Multilingualism, second language learning, and gender. In A. Pavlenko, A. Blackledge, I. Piller & M. Teutsch-Dwyer (Eds.), *Multilingualism, second language learning, and gender* (pp. 1-13). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Rahimpour, M., & Yaghoubi-Notash, M. (2007). Examining gender-based variability in task-prompted, monologic L2 oral performance [Electronic Version]. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly, 9*(3), 156-179.

Richards, J. C., Platt, J., & Platt, H. (Eds.). (2002) Longman dictionary of language teaching & applied linguistics (English-Chinese ed.). Beijing: 外語教學與研究出版社.

Schmenk, B. (2004). Language learning: A feminine domain? The role of stereotyping in constructing gendered learner identities [Electronic Version]. *TESOL Quarterly, 38*(3), 514-524.

Sunderland, J. (2000). Issues of language and gender in second and foreign language education. *Language Teaching, 33*, 203-223.

Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Swann, J. (2003). Schooled language: language and gender in educational settings. In J. Holmes & M. Meyerhoff (Eds.), *The handbook of language and gender*. Malden, MA: Blackwell publishing.

Talbot, M. M. (1998). *Language and gender: An introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Tannen, D. (1982). Ethnic style in male-female conversation. In J. J. Gumperz (Ed.), *Language and social identity* (pp. 217-231). New York: Cambridge University

Press.

Tannen, D., Kendall, S., & Adger, C. T. (1997). Conversational patterns across gender, class, and ethnicity: Implications for classroom discourse. In B. Davies & D. Corson (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education: Vol. 3. Oral discourse and education* (pp. 75-85). Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Thorne, B., & Henley, N. (1975). *Language and sex: Difference and dominance*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Tudge, J. (1992). Vygotsky, the zone of proximal development, and peer collaboration: Implication for classroom practice. In L. C. Moll (Ed.), *Vygotsky and education* (pp. 155-172). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Uchida, A. (1992). When "difference" is "dominance": A critique of the "anti-power-based" cultural approach to sex differences. *Language in Society*, 547-568.

van Lier, L. (1988). *The classroom and the language learner: Ethnography and second language research*. London: Longman.

Vandrick, S. (1994). Feminist pedagogy and ESL. *College ESL, 4*(2), 69-92.

Vandrick, S. (1995). Teaching and practicing feminism in the university ESL class. *TESOL Journal, 4*(2), 4-6.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Interaction between learning and development. In M. Cole, V. John-Steiner & E. Souberman (Eds.), *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological process* (pp. 79-91). Cambridge, MA: Harward University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1981). The genesis of higher mental functions. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *The concpet of activity in Soviet psychology* (pp. 144-188). New York: M. E. Sharpe.

Walsh, S. (2006). *Investigating classroom discourse*. New York: Routledge.

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender [Electronic Version]. *Gender and Society, 1*(2), 125-151.

Willett, J. (1996). Research as gendered practice. *TESOL Quarterly, 30*(2), 344-347.

Wodak, R., & Benke, G. (1997). Gender as a sociolinguistic variable: New perspectives on variation studies. In F. Coulmas (Ed.), *The handbook of sociolinguistics* (pp. 127-150). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form for an Instructor

University of San Francisco
Consent To Be A Research Subject
ESL Instructors

Purpose and Background

Hsiu-Lien Chu, doctoral student in the Department of International and Multicultural Education, School of Education, at the University of San Francisco, is conducting a study on gender in peer interaction in the ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom. This study will investigate the nature of peer interaction in pairs or groups, and the influence of gendered peer interaction on second language learning and development.

I am being asked to participate in this study because I am a current ESL instructor who uses pair and group discussions in the ESL class.

Procedures

If I agree to be a participant in this study, the following will happen:

1. I will allow the researcher to observe when I teach in an ESL class for 7 weeks, a total of 28 hours.

2. I will allow the researcher to audio-tape when I teach in an ESL class for 7 weeks, a total of 28 hours.

Risks and/or Discomforts

I am aware that emotional discomfort may arise when I am audio-taped; however I am free to decline to answer any questions or to stop my participation at any time.

My identity and that of my institution will be confidential. I will have the opportunity to choose a pseudonym. Audiotapes, transcriptions, and computer disks containing research information will be stored in a separate file where only the researcher can have access to data.

Benefits

The potential benefit for me to participate in this study will be the increased awareness of the dynamics of learners' interactions and have a better understanding of the role of gender and its influence on second language learning.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no financial costs to me as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement

I will not be reimbursed for my participation in this study. Snacks and drinks will be provided during class break on the first and after the researcher has finished data collection. A box of Dim Sum will be provided when classroom observation ends.

Questions

I have talked to Ms. Chu about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have further questions, comments, or concerns about this study, I may e-mail Hsiu-Lien Chu at [redacted] or call her at [redacted].

If I have any questions or comments about my participation in this study, I should first talk with the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the University of San Francisco's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by FAX at (415) 422-5528, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, Education Building, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subjects' Bill of Rights," and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to be in this study or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on my present or future status at the University of San Francisco.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature

Date of Signature

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date of Signature

Appendix B: Research Subjects' Bill of Rights

The rights below are the rights of every person who is asked to be in a research study. As a research subject, I have the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is trying to find out;

2. To be told what will happen to me and whether any of the procedures, drugs, or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice;

3. To be told about the frequent and/or important risks, side effects, or discomforts of the things that will happen to me for research purposes;

4. To be told if I can expect any benefit from participating, and, if so, what the benefit might be;

5. To be told of the other choices I have and how they may be better or worse than being in the study;

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study, both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study;

7. To be told what sort of medical or psychological treatment is available if any complications arise;

8. To refuse to participate at all or change my mind about participation after the study is started; if I were to make such a decision, it will not affect my right to receive the care or privileges I would receive if I were not in the study;

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form; and

10. To be free of pressure when considering whether I wish to agree to be in the study.

If I have other questions, I should ask the researcher. In addition, I may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS by calling (415) 422-6091, by electronic mail at IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to IRBPHS, School of Education, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form for Students

Informed Consent Form
University of San Francisco
Consent To Be A Research Subject
Students

Purpose and Background

Hsiu-Lien Chu, doctoral student in the Department of International and Multicultural Education, School of Education, at the University of San Francisco, is conducting a study on gender in peer interaction in the ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom. This study will investigate the nature of peer interaction in pairs or groups, and the influence of gendered peer interaction on second language learning and development.

I am being asked to participate in this study because I am an ESL student who will participate in pair or group discussions in the ESL classroom.

Procedures

If I agree to be a subject in this study, the following will happen:

1. I will allow the researcher to observe when I participate in pairs or groups for seven weeks, a total of 28 hours.

2. I will allow the researcher to audio-tape during discussions with group member(s) for seven weeks, a total of 28 hours.

3. I will participate in an hour long individual interview with the researcher, during which I will be asked about my educational history of learning English and my experiences of pair and group discussions in the ESL classroom.

4. I will allow the researcher to audio-tape during the above individual interview with the researcher.

5. I will allow the researcher to collect a copy of my written notes if I write something during discussions.

6. I will participate in informal conversational interviews if the researcher needs further data.

7. I will participate in email communications if the researcher needs further data.

Risks and/or Discomforts

I am aware that emotional discomfort may arise when sharing personal and academic

experiences of ESL learning; however I am free to decline to answer any questions or to stop my participation at any time.

My identity and that of my institution will be confidential. I will have the opportunity to choose a pseudonym. Audiotapes, transcriptions, and computer disks containing research information will be stored in a separate file where only the researcher can have access to data.

Benefits

The potential benefit for me to participate in this study will be the increased self-awareness of my English learning experiences as an ESL student and will have a better understanding of the role of gender on discussions and its influence on second language learning.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no financial costs to me as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement

I will not be reimbursed for my participation in this study. Snacks and drinks will be provided during class break on the first day of classroom observation and after the researcher has finished data collection.

Questions

I have talked to Ms. Chu about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have further questions, comments, or concerns about this study, I may e-mail Hsiu-Lien Chu at [redacted] or call her at [redacted].

If I have any questions or comments about my participation in this study, I should first talk with the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the University of San Francisco's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by FAX at (415) 422-5528, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, Education Building, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subjects' Bill of Rights," and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to be in this study or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on my

present or future status at the University of San Francisco.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature

Date of Signature

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date of Signature

Appendix D: Observation Guide for Classroom Interaction

Whole Class Interaction

1. Learning content
2. Goals of learning content
3. Topics
4. Relevance of learning materials to students' gender and cultural background
5. Participation

Pair or Group Interaction

1. Group type
2. Composition of gender
3. Discussion Topic
4. Goals of activities
5. Activity type
6. Participation
7. Initiation of discussion
8. Ending of discussion
9. Scaffolding during interactions

Appendix E: Pseudonym Assignment

Dissertation Research: Gender Dynamics in Peer Interaction and the Influence on Second Language Learning in the English-as-a-Second-Language Classroom

As a participant for this dissertation research, please check one of the following that indicates your selection regarding confidentiality. The name or pseudonym based on your own selection will be used in writing dissertation and possible future publication.

_____Please use my legal name _____

_____Please use the pseudonym _____

_____Please choose a pseudonym for me _____

_____ _____

Signature Date

Appendix F: Interview Guide

1. Would you please briefly describe yourself (including age, nationality, gender, socio-economic background, and experiences of learning English and staying in an English-speaking country)?
    A. How does your culture make you feel as a man/woman?
    B. In what ways do you present yourself in pairs or groups?

2. What does gender mean to you?

    A. Does gender play a role in your pairs or groups? And why?
    B. Would you please describe your experience when you work with a same-sex partner in pairs and with mostly same-sex partners in groups? And your experience when you work with an opposite-sex partner in pairs and with mostly opposite-sex partners in groups?

3. Would you please describe your experiences in pairs and groups?

    A. Describe your English language proficiency when you worked with different group member(s)?
    B. How do you relate to your different group members?
    C. What kinds of group type do you prefer, pairs or groups? And why?
    D. Who do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable to work with? And why?
    E. What are your ways of talking when you work with different partners? Any similarities or differences?
    F. How do you feel when you work with member(s) whose culture including their first language, age, nationality, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, are different from yours or, on the other hand, are similar to yours?

4. How does your experience in pairs and groups influence your English learning?
    A. How do those ways of talking influence your English learning during pair or group work?
    B. How do you show your agreement and disagreement?
    C. What do “um hum” “uh huh” “yeah” “yah” “right” mean to you?
    D. How do you tolerate vague meaning and keep their conversation going?
    E. Do you invite your partner to speak first? If so, why?
    F. Why do students repeat a few words that their partners just said?
    G. How do you ask for help from partner(s)?

5. Do you think your partners provide help for your English learning? If yes, in what ways? If not, how does your partner make it difficult for you to improve your English?

Appendix G: Transcription Conventions

[A *single left bracket* indicates the point of overlap onset.

] A *single right bracket* indicates the point at which an utterance or utterance-part terminates vis-à-vis another.

= *Equal signs*, one at the end of one line and one at the beginning of a next, indicate no "gap" between the two lines. This is often called latching.

. A *period* indicates a stopping fall in tone.

, A *comma* indicates a continuing intonation, like when you are reading items from a list.

<u>word</u> *Underscoring* indicates some form of stress, via pitch and/or amplitude.

:: *Colons* indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound.

- A *dash* indicates a cut-off.

? A *question mark* indicates a rising intonation.

↑↓ *Arrows* indicate marked shifts into higher or lower pitch in the utterance-part immediately following the arrow.

° Utterances or utterance-parts bracketed by *degree signs* are relatively quieter than the surrounding talk.

(source from: Have, P. t. (2007). *Doing Conversation Analysis* (2nd ed.) (pp. 215-216). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.)

Appendix H: IRBPHS Approval Notice

August 28, 2008

Dear Hsiu-Lien Chu:

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study.

Your application has been approved by the committee (IRBPHS #08-071). Please note the following:

1. Approval expires twelve (12) months from the dated noted above. At that time, if you are still in collecting data from human subjects, you must file a renewal application.

2. Any modifications to the research protocol or changes in instrumentation (including wording of items) must be communicated to the IRBPHS. Re-submission of an application may be required at that time.

3. Any adverse reactions or complications on the part of participants must be reported (in writing) to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRBPHS at (415) 422-6091.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

Terence Patterson, EdD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
---
IRBPHS University of San Francisco
Counseling Psychology Department
Education Building - 017
2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA 94117-1080
(415) 422-6091 (Message)
(415) 422-5528 (Fax)
irbphs@usfca.edu
---
http://www.usfca.edu/humansubjects/